DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 224 942 CE 034 708

AUTHOR Hailstone, D. L.; Grosvenor, J. S.
TITLE Evaluation of the 1981 Vocational Preparation Programme.
INSTITUTION National TAFE Clearinghouse, Adelaide (Australia).
REPORT NO TAFE-SA-5-3
PUB DATE Aug 82
NOTE 137p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Admission Criteria; Adolescents; Adult Vocational Education; Case Studies; Education Work Relationship; *Employment Potential; *Females; *Foreign Countries; Job Training; *Out of School Youth; Program Administration; Program Evaluation; Questionnaires; Student Recruitment; *Unemployment; *Vocational Education; Young Adults; Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Australia (South Australia)

ABSTRACT

An evaluation project investigated the Vocational Preparation Programme conducted in 1981 by the South Australian Department of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). The vocational preparation program was designed to increase the employability of young unemployed people aged 15 to 19 by providing them with an understanding of a family of related occupations in a specific industry and basic skills relevant to a range of occupations in that industry. Data were obtained from interviews with students, lecturers and college staff, head office staff, and employers; course records and employer reports; and student questionnaires. Case studies were made of dental studies, basic farm skills, and fiberglass boat building courses. Program-level administration rested with the Transition Education Unit; curriculum design and implementation were a college-level responsibility. Typically, students were referred to colleges by the Commonwealth Employment Service and then were selected by college staff. The system was workable although some differences in priorities were evident. The predominance of females in the courses was consistent with a program emphasis on unemployed young women. Nearly 50 percent of former students were employed. Personal development was cited as a benefit by 80 percent of surveyed students. (Appendixes include instruments and a summary of evaluation findings.) (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED224942

EVALUATION OF THE 1981 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME

Written by :
D. L. Hailstone

assisted by :
J. S. Grosvenor

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D Kuhl

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

TAFE CLEARINGHOUSE ACCESSION NUMBER S.A. 5·3
DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION, SOUTH AUSTRALIA ..... AUGUST 1982

CE 034108

CCI 2

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PROJECT

The following represents a list of groups and individuals who have contributed to this project.

- The Project Advisory Group, who together contributed to the refinement of the project's terms of reference, endorsed various project documents and individually provided invaluable service in many aspects of the project.

- The project team - D. Hailstone, the project officer responsible for collecting data used in the project and for report writing, and J. Grosvenor, Project Manager who, with the project officer, developed the project design and research methodology as well as contributing to the preparation of the report.

- D. Kuhl, Programme Manager, for advice, writing and editing support.

- Members of the Department's Transition Education Unit, in particular Mr. R. Jackson (formerly Head of the Unit) and Ms. Judith Haigh (Project Officer, Vocational Preparation programme) who contributed expertise from the transition education point of view.

- Principals, heads of schools, lecturers and students who supplied data essential for the preparation of the report.

SUMMARY

This project was one of several studies in the field of transition education conducted by the Department's Research Branch in 1981. The project was intended to describe the Vocational Preparation programme and provide an evaluation in terms of the programme's broad aims and objectives.

Vocational Preparation courses in 1981 represented one component of the Department of Technical and Further Education's Commonwealth funded School-to-Work Transition Programme. They were full-time courses for unemployed youth and were designed and provided by individual colleges of TAFE. Their main objective was to increase the employability of young people, particularly young women, by providing vocational skills, knowledge and experience in specific types of industries. Each course was designed around the labour requirements of one general industry or of a set of industries within a particular geographical area. The courses were pitched at a skill-level below that of apprenticeship training.

The project gathered data from a variety of sources (head office and college administrators, Vocational Preparation lecturers and students, and selected employers) from June, 1981 to December, 1981.

The following overview summarizes the project's findings in relation to each of nine major issues deriving from the Vocational Preparation programme's aims and objectives and outlines developments beyond 1981.

1. POSITION WITHIN THE TRANSITION EDUCATION PROGRAMME (Chapter 10)

The courses complemented the other types of courses provided in the Department's Transition Education Programme (particularly in terms of findings 2, 3, 5 below).

Subsequent action: The complementary arrangements continued into the 1982 programme.

2. EMPHASIS ON YOUNG WOMEN (Sections 9.2.1, 10.3.1)

The programme catered particularly for the needs of young women. Women constituted 75% of enrolments and obtained post-course employment at rates commensurate with the male students.

Subsequent action: A similar emphasis was planned for the 1982 programme.

3. EMPHASIS ON COUNTRY YOUTH (Section 10.3.2)

14 of the 29 courses were staged in country settings, particularly those served by the smaller colleges.

Subsequent action: A similar per capita bias towards country youth was intended for 1982.

4. LEVEL OF SKILL-TRAINING (Section 10.3.4)

The courses entailed occupational training at a lower skill-level than apprenticeship training.

Subsequent action: The same policy continued in 1982.

5. INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS SELECTED FOR COURSES (Chapter 10)

In general each course focused on a cluster of industry (or locality) related occupations with reasonable employment prospects. None of the courses were replications of other courses offered in the Department's overall programme (although some similarities were evident).

Subsequent action: The policy continued in 1982. For certain courses efforts to strengthen ties with industry were increased.

6. ADMINISTRATION (Chapter 7)

Programme-level administration rested with the head office Transition Education Unit. Curriculum design and implementation were a college-level responsibility. Generally the two-fold system was satisfactory. However, some temporary staff introducing courses to a college received additional administrative workloads.

Subsequent action: The system continued in 1982 with added assistance (pre-course 'preparation time' for lecturers, and Curriculum Development Branch participation) for colleges staging new courses.

7. STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION (Chapter 8)

Typically students were referred to colleges by the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) and then were selected by college staff. The system was workable although some differences between the priorities of the two parties were evident.

Subsequent action: For 1982 a revised approach using both CES referrals and open-advertisement was adopted.

8. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS (Chapter 9)

The programme generally succeeded in obtaining those students within the target age-group and with the unemployment history cited in the Commonwealth's selection guidelines.

Students with substantial social, financial, educational or attitudinal problems were present in many courses.

9. OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS (Chapter 10)

Nearly 50% of former students (surveyed in November 1981) were employed. Most students interviewed stated that their employment prospects had been improved by the course. Personal development was cited as a benefit by 80% of surveyed students particularly in terms of enhanced self-esteem, self-confidence and job-seeking skills.

Subsequent action: It is understood that the follow-up surveys previously conducted by DIAE will continue throughout 1982.

The above statements and developments are reported in more detail in Appendix G.

LIST OF CONTENTS

		page no.
CHAPTER 1	ORIGINS AND OUTLINE OF THE 1981 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME	3
1·1	INTRODUCTION	3
1·2	THE PRECURSOR : THE PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME 1980	3
1·3	THE BROAD CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 1981 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME	5
CHAPTER 2	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION PROJECT	11
2·1	INTRODUCTION	11
2·2	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	11
2·3	GENERAL DESIGN	12
2·4	DATA COLLECTION	13
2·5	VALIDITY	13
2·6	REPORTING	14
2·7	SCHEDULE	14
2·8	ADMINISTRATION	15
CHAPTER 3	RATIONALE AND DESIGN OF THE VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME	19
3·1	INTRODUCTION	19
3·2	PLACE IN THE TRANSITION EDUCATION PROGRAMME	19
3·3	RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRAINING AND LABOUR REQUIREMENTS OF INDUSTRY	21
3·4	CURRICULAR CHARACTERISTICS	23
3·5	GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL COURSES	23
CHAPTER 4	DENTAL STUDIES (GILLES PLAINS COMMUNITY COLLEGE)	27
4·1	INTRODUCTION	27
4·2	NEED FOR THE COURSE	27
4·3	OVERVIEW OF THE 1981 DENTAL STUDIES COURSE	27
4·4	SELECTION OF STUDENTS	28
4·5	STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS	29
4·6	THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN THE COURSE	29
4·7	THE OUTCOME OF THE DENTAL STUDIES COURSE	31
4·8	MAJOR FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COURSE	33
4·9	SUMMARY	34
CHAPTER 5	CASE STUDY : BASIC FARM SKILLS (NARACOORTE COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION)	39
5·1	INTRODUCTION	39
5·2	EVENTS LEADING TO THE FUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BASIC FARM SKILLS COURSE	39
5·3	THE APPOINTMENT OF A LECTURER	41
5·4	CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE LECTURER AND THE NARACOORTE FARMING COMMUNITY IN DEVELOPING A COURSE CURRICULUM	41
5·5	THE COURSE CURRICULUM DESIGNED BY THE LECTURER	42
5·6	THE COURSE EXPERIENCE	43
5·7	STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE COURSE	46
5·8	ISSUES ARISING FROM THE COURSE	46
5·9	THE BASIC FARM SKILLS COURSE – VIEWED AS AN EXPERIMENT	50
CHAPTER 6	CASE STUDY : FIBREGLASS BOAT BUILDING (PORT ADELAIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION)	53
6·1	INTRODUCTION	53
6·2	THE COLLEGE SETTING	53
6·3	THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIBREGLASS BOAT BUILDING COURSE	54
6·4	THE COURSE EXPERIENCE	55
6·5	THE OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE	57
6·6	IMPLICATIONS	58

CCC 7

		page no.
CHAPTER 7	**ADMINISTRATION**	63
	7·1 INTRODUCTION	63
	7·2 THE BROAD ADMINISTRATIVE PATTERN	63
	7·3 CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION	63
	7·4 ADMINISTRATION IN COLLEGES	66
CHAPTER 8	**THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STUDENTS IN THE VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME**	79
	8·1 INTRODUCTION	79
	8·2 COMMONWEALTH AND DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES WITH RESPECT TO RECRUITING STUDENTS FOR TRANSITION EDUCATION PROGRAMMES	79
	8·3 THE INVOLVEMENT OF COLLEGES AND THE CES IN RECRUITING STUDENTS	81
	8·4 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RECRUITING AND SELECTION PROCESS	82
	8·5 ISSUES IN THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS	83
	8·6 SUITABILITY OF STUDENTS	86
	8·7 THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF SMALL COUNTRY COLLEGES	86
CHAPTER 9	**STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS**	91
	9·1 INTRODUCTION	91
	9·2 STUDENTS' BACKGROUND	91
	9·3 REASONS MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO ENROL IN VOCATIONAL PREPARATION COURSES	96
	9·4 STUDENTS' PERSONAL PROBLEMS	98
CHAPTER 10	**OUTCOMES**	101
	10·1 INTRODUCTION	101
	10·2 OUTCOMES FOR THE STUDENT	101
	10·3 BROADER OUTCOMES	107
	APPENDICES	111
	NOTES	163

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

ORIGINS AND OUTLINE OF THE 1981 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME

1·1 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the evaluation project which investigated the Vocational Preparation programme conducted in 1981 by the South Australian Department of Technical and Further Education*. The aims and design of the project are described in Chapter Two. The immediate discussion sets the context; it outlines the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme.

Vocational Preparation courses comprised one component of the Department of Technical and Further Education's 1981 Commonwealth funded Transition Education Programme. They were intended to increase the employability of young people aged between 15 and 19 years who had experienced unemployment for at least four months over the preceding year. In 1981 twenty nine Vocational Preparation courses were provided in eighteen Colleges of Technical and Further Education, catering for approximately 435 students, 75% of whom were young women. These were generally short courses, less than 20 weeks, providing basic skills and knowledge in non-trade industries, particularly the service and catering fields and to a lesser extent primary and secondary production. They carried no formal accreditation to existing Departmental certificate programmes, and were designed to promote young people's direct accession to the workforce.

The 1981 Vocational Preparation programme represented a development of the Department's transition education offering in 1980, notably the Pre-Vocational programme of that year. The scope and characteristics of that earlier programme from which the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme evolved are outlined below.

1·2 THE PRECURSOR : THE PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME 1980

Following the announcement of a "Comprehensive Policy on School-to-Work transition" by the Commonwealth Government in November 1979, $210 000 of $1.25 million was spent in South Australia on full-time courses for unemployed young people, both in pre-apprenticeship and non-apprenticeable vocations. Thirty two full-time courses for approximately 440 students

---

* In February 1982, the Department of Further Education was renamed the Department of Technical and Further Education (DTAFE). Also Colleges of Further Education became Colleges of TAFE. In this report, 1982 terminology will be used in referring to the Department and its colleges.

were provided in South Australian Colleges of Technical and Further Education, the length of courses varying from 8 to 20 weeks.

These Pre-Vocational courses represented a broad range of vocational education initiatives, with an emphasis on:

- basic skill development, rather than intensive, occupation-specific
- personal development and general career education.

Particularly with respect to basic skill development, two broad groups of courses were distinguished in the 1980 programme as:

- those courses providing familiarization with particular trade-based occupations. Some were pitched below the skill level of a tradesman (e.g., at the level of an 'assistant to a tradesman'). Others were pitched higher, resembling parts of apprenticeship or certificate courses in, for example, the automotive, hairdressing or electrical trades.
- those courses designed to bring students closer to general skills within a family of occupations. These courses sought to increase the participants' skills and understanding in a particular family of occupations, with a view to enhancing their employability in the labour market.

It was assumed that lack of employment experience and specific occupation related skills, together with unrealistic job expectations, contributed significantly to the high level of unemployment in the 15 - 19 years age group. Pre-Vocational courses were intended to help redress some of these problems.

Table 1 indicates the broad categories of courses funded under the 1980 Pre-Vocational banner along with numbers of students taking a given number of course types.

In 1981 the two groups of courses provided under the Pre-Vocational title in 1980 were differentiated into separate programmes: the Pre-Vocational programme and the Vocational Preparation programme.

Pre-Vocational courses in 1981 were oriented towards specific groups of occupations (such as metal trades, or electrical trades) and entailed skill development similar to that provided in the first year of formal apprenticeship or certificate courses. They were designed to carry formal accreditation for later apprenticeship/certificate training.

TABLE 1 CATEGORIES OF COURSES FUNDED UNDER THE 1980 PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME

COURSE CATEGORY	NUMBER OF COURSES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
AUTOMOTIVE	6	72
AVIATION	1	12
METAL FABRICATION	2	24
HORTICULTURE , GARDENING	3	38
OFFICE PROCEDURE	4	57
CUSTOMER CONTACT	8	104
SERVICE INDUSTRIES	6	87
HEALTH AREAS	2	36
TOTAL	32	440

Vocational Preparation courses, on the other hand, were not tied to the formal training customarily required of employees in some vocations. They did not provide carry over accreditation for later course work in apprenticeship or 'certificate' training programmes, although some courses could orient students towards more advanced training programmes in specific vocational areas. They were intended to prepare young people for immediate employment (more so than for further education) by providing basic skills and a general knowledge of the procedures and practices of the industries addressed.

Importantly, in view of the broader use of the term 'Pre-Vocational' throughout Australia, (Ainley and Fordham, 1979[1]), the Department's differentiation between Pre-Vocational and Vocational Preparation programmes in 1981 can be regarded as a specialized interpretation. Outside South Australia, TAFE authorities would probably regard both types of courses as particular variants of 'pre-vocational education'.

1·3 THE BROAD CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 1981 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME

1.3.1 MAIN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In general, Vocational Preparation courses were designed to increase the employability of young unemployed people by providing them with (a) an understanding of a family of related occupations in a specific industry and (b) basic skills relevant to a range of occupations in that specific industry. Vocational Preparation courses also were intended to provide personal development skills and a broader understanding of career opportunities. This would enable young people to improve their chances of selecting the relevant area of employment and successfully approaching employers and, once engaged as a worker, retaining employment.

Accordingly, the main objectives for students in the programme were:

- the development of suitable work habits and attitudes towards job seeking,
- general career orientation,
- the acquisition of realistic vocational goals and expectations, and
- the acquisition of some broadly-based occupational skills.

1.3.2 COURSE TYPES

A few Vocational Preparation courses in 1981 were new initiatives, designed to cater for particular industries or occupations not addressed by the Department. Examples of these include: 'Basic Farm Skills' at Naracoorte and Yorke Peninsula Colleges of Technical and Further Education, and 'Fibre-glass Boat Building' at Pt. Adelaide Community College (TAFE).

The other courses were replications of (or developments from) courses previously provided under the 'Pre-Vocational' title in 1980: for example, 'Customer Contact' at Croydon Park College and 'Retail Sales' at Pt. Adelaide College. Some of these had been piloted in one college and then were translocated to others in 1981. The 'Health Auxiliaries' course, for example, initially developed and offered at Pt. Adelaide Community College (TAFE), was subsequently staged at Yorke Peninsula and Panorama Colleges.

A major consideration influencing the selection of courses for the programme was the relevance of the course to young women. A second concern was the course's suitability for country colleges. Both concerns stemmed from the belief that transition education courses should be accessible to young people across the State and particularly to young women.

Table 2 lists courses in the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme, and specifies their locations, student numbers, course length and starting dates.

1.3.3 CURRICULUM CHARACTERISTICS

The curricula for individual Vocational Preparation courses were not bound to a pre-specified format. Instead, each course was expected to be designed around the specific requirements of either an industry operating across the State or a range of industries functioning within a particular geographical locality. Importantly, all courses were to include on-the-job-training and work observation elements to allow students to gain practical skills and specific work experience.

In addition, personal development activities such as communication skills

or basic grooming and deportment, were expected to form an important part of the learning experience of Vocational Preparation courses. Such elements were expected to increase the employability of students by improving their social and self-direction skills. It was not intended, however, that Vocational Preparation courses would provide basic literacy and numeracy skill development as was the intention of some other transition education programmes such as Educational Programmes for Unemployed Youth (EPUY), and, to a lesser extent, Foundation courses.

1.3.4 ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The Vocational Preparation programme was funded to the extent of $192 000 from the Commonwealth's School-to-work transition education allocation to the State. In general, the programme was centrally administered, specifically under a co-ordinator in the Department's Transition Education Unit. Courses were normally established either on an individual basis within a specific department of a college, or as part of a broader college submission for transition education funding. In most cases, colleges prepared course submissions in consultation with the appropriate industry and with the Commonwealth Employment Service. The programme co-ordinator assumed responsibility for investigating each proposal before seeking approval for the allocation of funds. The responsibility for designing and implementing courses generally remained with colleges.

Criteria for funding courses proposed by individual colleges included the 'job prospects' in the relevant industry or locality addressed by the course. This criterion devolved from a belief that, while in general there was a dearth of employment opportunities, labour shortages existed in specific areas of the economy (especially in 'non-trade', semi-skilled occupations). Furthermore, it was intended that Vocational Preparation courses would not be funded until central administrators were satisfied that the proposed course matched a need in the semi-skilled area, and some evidence was provided of support by the local Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) and industry.

1.3.5 STUDENT CLIENTELE

The courses were provided principally for young people in the 15 to 19 years age group who had experienced at least four months unemployment in the twelve months preceding the course. Within the broad rationale of the Department's transition education programme, it was expected that students would be less oriented towards a specific vocation than those in Pre-Vocational courses, but more so than students in Foundation courses.

The recruitment of students for each course usually followed interviews with unemployed young people referred by the Commonwealth Employment Service. Individual colleges were able to specify additional selection criteria (e.g. educational background) for each course funded under the programme.

1.3.6 DURATION

The duration of Vocational Preparation courses varied from six to twenty weeks, with most occupying eight to twelve weeks, and they were attended on a 'full-time' basis. The courses therefore were shorter in length than Pre-Vocational and Foundation courses which ran for periods of about twenty weeks.

TABLE 2 **LIST OF COURSES FUNDED UNDER THE 1981 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME**

COURSE	COLLEGE	NUMBER STUDENTS			LENGTH	STARTING DATE
		M	F	TOTAL	WEEKS	
VARIED TRADES	EYRE PENINSULA	14	1	15	20	FEBRUARY 16
VARIED TRADES	MURRAY BRIDGE	15		15	16	JULY 20
CUSTOMER CONTACT	CROYDON		15	15	12	MARCH 9
CUSTOMER CONTACT	CROYDON	2	14	16	10	JUNE 8
CUSTOMER CONTACT	CROYDON		14	14	12	SEPTEMBER 21
CUSTOMER CONTACT	ADELAIDE	1	12	13	10	JUNE 8
HEALTH AUXILIARY	PORT ADELAIDE		18	18	10	MARCH 9
HEALTH AUXILIARY	YORKE PENINSULA		15	15	10	SEPTEMBER 14
HEALTH AUXILIARY	PANORAMA	2	27	29	12	SEPTEMBER 21
FASHION INDUSTRY	GILLES PLAINS		12	12	12	MARCH 23
DENTAL STUDIES	GILLES PLAINS		15	15	12	MARCH 23
DENTAL STUDIES	GILLES PLAINS		11	11	12	OCTOBER 5
HORTICULTURE	KENSINGTON PARK (Yarrabee Annexe)	10	5	15	12	JUNE 22
FOOD AND BAR SERVICE	GAWLER	1	14	15	6	MARCH 9
FOOD AND BAR SERVICE	RIVERLAND	3	12	15	6	JUNE 29
FOOD AND BAR SERVICE	SOUTH EAST	3	8	11	6	OCTOBER 26
FOOD AND BAR SERVICE	PORT PIRIE		15	15	6	OCTOBER 26
RETAIL SALES	PORT ADELAIDE	3	15	18	8	MAY 9
RETAIL SALES	GAWLER	3	12	15	8	JULY 13
RETAIL SALES	MURRAY BRIDGE		15	15	6	JULY 20
RETAIL SALES	O'HALLORAN HILL		15	15	8	OCTOBER 5
RETAIL SALES	SALISBURY		16	16	6	OCTOBER 26
RETAIL SALES	KENSINGTON PARK		15	15	8	OCTOBER 19
RETAIL SALES	SOUTH EAST	3	12	15	6	OCTOBER 13
SMALL BUSINESS PROCED	EYRE PENINSULA		15	15	12	JULY 3
BASIC FARM SKILLS	NARACOORTE	4	4	8	8	AUGUST 3
BASIC FARM SKILLS	YORKE PENINSULA	15		15	4	NOVEMBER 2
FIBREGLASS BOAT BLDG	PORT ADELAIDE	15		15	8	OCTOBER 12
FISH PROCESSING	EYRE PENINSULA	15		15	5	OCTOBER 26
TOTAL		109	326	435		

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION PROJECT

2·1 INTRODUCTION

In its proposals for the 1981 Transition Education Programme, the Department included a set of four projects each intended to evaluate different aspects of the 1981 programme. The nature and findings of the other projects are reported elsewhere. The evaluation project which gave rise to this report sought to describe and evaluate the Department's 1981 programme of Vocational Preparation courses. This project was funded by the Commonwealth and housed in the Department's Research Branch.

2·2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the project were refined from terms of reference supplied to the project team when it was assembled in May 1981.[9] The terms of reference required that the programme of Vocational Preparation courses be evaluated in its entirety but with special emphasis on those aspects identified as topical and important by parts of the Department concerned with the programme's design and implementation. The various interests were represented formally by members of the project's advisory group (from the colleges, Curriculum Development Branch and the Transition Education Unit). The main audience for the project's reporting were identified and their stated needs guided the refinement of the project's specifications throughout the project.

2.2.1 PRIMARY AUDIENCE

The project was intended to serve first and foremost the evaluation requirements of decision-makers concerned with the provision of Vocational Preparation courses at the programme level. The Transition Education State Steering Committee and administrators in Head Office and the colleges therefore were the primary audience.

2.2.2 SECONDARY AUDIENCE

The project also was intended to provide information to another audience comprising (a) the Department's transition education practitioners in general and (b) the wider community concerned with transition education.

From discussions with personnel in those two categories it was established that the following issues warranted investigations providing descriptive and evaluative information:

- the Vocational Preparation programme's rationale within the context of transition education,
- the administrative characteristics of the programme,
- the recruitment and selection of students,
- the effectiveness of courses in terms of the programme's intentions.

The project originally was intended to provide a detailed description of the curricula of the courses. However, that task was taken up by the Department's Curriculum Development Branch during 1981 and therefore was excluded from the project. In order to provide some accounts which complemented the Curriculum Development Branch's documentation, the project incorporated a series of case-studies each focusing on a specific course.

Extensive investigation of post-course outcomes for the entire Vocational Preparation programme was not undertaken for two reasons. Firstly, the project's data collection had to be completed before many of the courses had finished. (The project's fieldwork concluded in November 1981; some courses continued until early December 1981). Secondly, the Department of Industrial Affairs and Employment was engaged in a survey of graduates from the courses in order to determine (among other aims) their occupational destinations. That investigation was seen as a complementary exercise which in any event should not be duplicated by the Vocational Preparation Evaluation Project. However, a telephone survey of 120 students who had completed 17 Vocational Preparation courses was carried out in November 1981. The survey provided information on (a) the students' destinations (e.g., employed, unemployed), and (b) their opinions and comments on the courses.

The project was intended to provide both summative and formative information where

- summative evaluation is intended to indicate the overall merit of the programme, and
- formative evaluation is intended to contribute information assisting the development of the programme during the investigation.

2·3 GENERAL DESIGN

The project adopted Stake's (1967)[2] model for evaluation - a model applied to the field of 'pre-vocational' education in Ainley and Fordham's 1979 study.[3] This model requires the researcher to describe and to analyse and compare.

- the intentions (aims and objectives) held by the various parties associated with the programme and those intentions with

- the actual events which transpired within the programme.

The data collection and analysis was directed towards establishing consistencies and contingencies amongst those facets of the programme.

2·4 DATA COLLECTION

The main forms of data collection were as follows:

2.4.1 INTERVIEWS

Students, lecturers and other college staff, head office staff and selected employers were interviewed. The list of formal interviews with Departmental personnel is shown in Appendix B.

2.4.2 COURSE RECORDS AND ARTEFACTS

Departmental files, correspondence, and data obtained from curriculum documents prepared by Curriculum Branch in 1981, and other records provided by lecturers included

- diaries with daily entries of events in courses;
- students' written work completed in classes; and
- written reports from employers accommodating students for 'on-job' training.

2.4.3 QUESTIONNAIRES

Two questionnaires were administered to students, one at the beginning of their course, and the other at the end. (see appendices C and D).

2.4.4 CONCURRENT EVALUATION PROJECTS

Data was also obtained from other evaluation projects (and their staff) in the Department's transition education evaluation programme.

2·5 VALIDITY

Two approaches to data validation were employed in the project:

2.5.1 CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Where possible, two or more 'measures' were applied to the same construct under investigation. That is, the accounts of different individuals or different types of data were 'triangulated' according to the approach of Webb et al (1966).[4] (see Appendix A).

2.5.2 PARTICIPANTS' ENDORSEMENT

Drafts of case-studies were submitted to participants for comments on the authenticity of statements attributed to them or the interpretations of events in which they took part. Participants were guaranteed the opportunity to redress 'factual errors' and, if the researcher's interpretation was disputed, to have added to the report their interpretations of any points which remained contentious.

2·6 REPORTING

This report represents but one form of reporting used in the project. Findings were presented to the specified audiences as they emerged. Such information was passed on to clients in the following ways:

2.6.1 INTERIM REPORTS

Two interim reports were produced in May and August 1981 during the course of the project field work. Each contained an analysis of questionnaire data supplied by students (see 2.4.3).

2.6.2 INFORMAL 'FEED BACK' TO PARTICIPANTS

During the field work period, the research team passed the general 'picture' of the programme's strengths and weaknesses to transition education administrators.

2.6.3 IN-COMMITTEE 'WORKING DOCUMENT'

On 14 December 1981 a preliminary draft of this report was tabled at a meeting of the project's advisory group.

2·7 SCHEDULE

The project's field work commenced in June 1981 and was completed in November of the same year.

2·8 ADMINISTRATION

The project was placed under the administration of the Department's Research Branch. The project was staffed from May 1981 by one full-time project officer and one project manager employed in the Applied Educational Research Section of the Research Branch. Administrative independence was maintained from the rest of the Transition Education Programme and particularly from the Transition Education Unit.

A Project Advisory Group comprising representatives from the Transition Education Unit, Curriculum Development Branch, Research Branch and the field, was established to assist project personnel in the development and refinement of the project's specifications.

The Project's Advisory Group did not provide an official, managerial role. Instead it provided advice and its members acted in a consultative capacity (see Appendix E).

CHAPTER 3

RATIONALE AND DESIGN OF THE VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME

3·1 INTRODUCTION

Although most of its courses had some precedent in 1980, the Vocational Preparation programme taken as an entity was a new initiative in 1981. This chapter describes the rationale and design of the programme and approaches that task from two perspectives:

- the programme's place in the Department's overall transition education 'package', and
- the programme's relationship with the training and labour requirements of industry.

The description is drawn principally from interviews with personnel in the Department's Transition Education Unit which was responsible for developing the programme's rationale and design during the 1980-81 period. Since the programme evolved from the 1980 'Pre-Vocational programme', comprehensive and detailed documentation of its underlying principles was not prepared before courses commenced in 1981.

3·2 PLACE IN THE TRANSITION EDUCATION PACKAGE

The Vocational Preparation programme was conceived according to the broad aims cited in chapter one. The following discussion presents the rationale underlying these aims.

3.2.1 EMPHASIS ON THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF UNEMPLOYED YOUNG WOMEN

The Commonwealth's guidelines for projects funded under its 'School-to-Work' programme placed emphasis on those activities which deliberately and positively addressed the problems which young women face in making the transition from school to work or further education. The Vocational Preparation programme was underwritten with this concern for young women. The concern might have been anticipated solely as an application of the Commonwealth's guidelines.

However another development heightened the concern. The Department's 1981 transition education programme included a substantial commitment of State and Commonwealth transition funds and hence of student placements for Pre-Vocational courses in the metal and electrical trades. It had been

predicted that these trade-oriented courses would tend to attract more male than female students. This tacit emphasis on male dominated courses at the trade level therefore would create an imbalance away from young women and hence the Commonwealth requirement would not be met. Since Vocational Preparation courses were the closest relation to Pre-Vocational courses in terms of level of occupational training, it was decided that the Vocational Preparation programme should provide a counterbalance. Thus the Vocational Preparation programme was designed to cater particularly for young women.

The approach for realizing this intention was as follows:

- In general the types of Vocational Preparation courses that would be favoured were to be those attractive to unemployed young women. However, courses likely to be attractive to males were not deliberately excluded.

- The favoured types of courses would not be those likely to direct young women towards certain traditionally female occupations whose employment prospects were poor. For example, courses on secretarial skills were not considered useful, despite their popularity with young women, because of (a) an over-supply (in the State context) of labour with those skills in the immediate and short-term and (b) the increasing obsolescence of those skills in the long-term due to technological change.

- It was not intended that only females could enrol in the courses or that female applicants for courses necessarily would be selected in favour of any male applicants deemed equally or more eligible on grounds other than sex.

3.2.2 EMPHASIS ON THE SMALL COUNTRY COLLEGE

With the exception of EFUY (which has run largely independent of the network of colleges and thus other types of transition education courses) the Department's transition education programme centred on the larger colleges. This decision stemmed from the resource requirements of Foundation and Pre-Vocational (trade) courses: only the larger colleges had the required capacity. In effect, the Department's smaller colleges were prevented from staging full-time transition education courses. In order to involve the smaller colleges in transition education it therefore was decided that Vocational Preparation courses (which did not necessarily require the resources typically limited to larger colleges) would be sited as far as possible in the smaller colleges.

However, the siting of courses in smaller colleges gained importance from another major concern. The smaller colleges served much of rural South Australia. By placing Vocational Preparation courses in the small country college transition education offerings could be extended to those unemployed youth remote from the larger regional colleges or the city. In brief, the emphasis on the small country college counter-balanced other transition education offerings in more populous areas.

3.2.3 BROAD-BASED TRAINING

The Vocational Preparation programme was intended to provide courses which, in terms both of the applicant's prior commitment to certain occupations and the level of occupational skill development, lay between

- Foundation courses, with their emphasis on vocational 'tasting', and
- Pre-Vocational courses, with their emphasis on occupational training in two or three trades at the first year apprenticeship or certificate level.

Accordingly the Vocational Preparation courses were to suit those unemployed youth who sought training for a range of occupations and were not restricted to one or two occupations, unlike Pre-Vocational courses. The reasons for this approach were as follows:

- the belief that the job-specific training lay outside the Commonwealth's 'School-to-Work' guidelines,
- the belief that broader-based training provided greater access to employment in the medium and long term than did narrower training, and
- the belief that training an individual for skills pertaining to one specialised occupation in one industry, or even in one firm, remained the responsibility of the employer rather than of governmentally sponsored programmes for particularly the young unemployed.

It was assumed that in a particular industry many occupations shared certain features or were inter-related in such a way that one broad-based training course could address several of those occupations. In addition it was also assumed that occupations across several industries related by their common locality could be addressed in a similar manner. This second assumption was intended to open up courses in country areas where

- industries were closely related because of the community's isolation, or
- each industry (or firm) contained relatively few types of occupations (or job prospects) and hence a 'pooling' of industries would be required for a course.

3.3 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRAINING AND LABOUR REQUIREMENTS OF INDUSTRY

The programme's rationale included the following assumptions about industry's training needs and occupational openings.

3.3.1 GAPS IN THE DEPARTMENT'S WIDER PROGRAMME

Based largely on their experience with similar courses prior to 1981 the personnel who drew up the Vocational Preparation programme considered that

- the Department's overall vocational training programme traditionally and understandably omitted courses pertaining to certain small but specialised industries or, more specifically, to some occupations within certain industries.

- these omissions have been particularly evident in occupations whose skill requirements have been below those of the trades (or their equivalents);

- in many instances the skills required of personnel in one of these neglected occupations are transferable to other occupations.

It was argued that these gaps provided openings for relatively short courses at the 'semi-skilled' level and addressing clusters of occupations in or across industries (discussed in section 3.2.3).

3.3.2 EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

The programme was intended to provide courses focusing on occupations where there was a reasonable likelihood of job vacancies. Furthermore it was seen as a potential but modest contribution to job 'stimulation' and job 'preservation' in South Australia. The underlying arguments were as follows:

- Since the majority of the State's workforce has been employed within the heterogeneous world of 'small business', training for employment should not be limited to the handful of major vocations in the larger industries. That is, employment targets may well be attained by approaches which include the training of many small groups each for different 'minor' occupations.

- Many firms employing personnel whose occupations have not been addressed by formal (e.g. Departmental) training programmes may have been unable to find suitable labour because (a) 'suitably skilled' applicants have not been available and (b) the employers have not been able to provide the required training or retraining. By seeking out these occupations within certain industries, the programme's designers believed that appropriate courses could stimulate employers and thereby reveal some job vacancies that otherwise would have remained latent.

- The designers also suspected that some industries (or occupations within them) were in danger of being lost to the State because of impending discontinuities. For example, in one small industry (employing less than twenty people state-wide) the average age of personnel approached sixty and no young individuals were being employed. The skills characterising those occupations therefore were not being passed on to others. Though the designers considered that this situation was not widespread, it nevertheless presented another

opportunity for a 'micro' approach to training as well as sustaining, if not stimulating, employment positions in this State.

3·4 CURRICULAR CHARACTERISTICS

In general characteristics intended for courses within the programme were (a) flexibility and (b) experiential learning through on-job-training.

3.4.1 FLEXIBILITY

The programme's designers intended that the 'rules' controlling the operation of Vocational Preparation courses would be kept to a minimum. The quest for flexibility stemmed partly from the acknowledgement that courses which addressed quite different occupations or industries could require distinctly different curricula and teaching methodologies. In particular the courses should be responsive to the needs of the students while at the same time taking advantage of college and community resources.

3.4.2 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND ON-JOB-TRAINING

The staff in the Transition Education Unit supported the principle of experiential learning. Accordingly each course in the Vocational Preparation programme was intended to be as practical as possible, drawing on real and simulated work situations as the preferred setting for tuition. On-job-training - a term referring to the placement of students within industry for practical tuition and work experience - therefore was to be a central part of the curriculum, particularly since it appeared likely that individuals within the client group would lack employment experience.

3·5 GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL COURSES

The above characteristics were used as the basis for determining whether or not a proposed course would be funded under the Vocational Preparation programme. (The associated administrative mechanisms are discussed in Chapter 7). The courses were expected to be flexible and experiential.

Submissions for courses were also required to demonstrate that each course was feasible in terms of

- the availability of a sufficiently large client group to ensure that a class (of about fifteen students) could be covered,
- the job prospects for graduates would be 'reasonable' in light of the local industry and probable vacancies within it, and
- the course proposed was manageable and cost-effective in terms of special funding and available college resources (both physical and human).*

---

* See Chapter Seven. 'Administration': 7.4.2.

CHAPTER 4

DENTAL STUDIES (GILLES PLAINS COMMUNITY COLLEGE)

4·1 INTRODUCTION

In 1981 two Vocational Preparation Dental Studies courses were provided by Gilles Plains Community College (TAFE) School of Para Dental Studies. The following discussion relates to both courses, and draws upon information derived from the following groups:

- Lecturers and administrative staff involved with the course at the College.
- Students who participated in both courses.
- Selected employers within the dental industry.

4·2 NEED FOR THE COURSE

The need for the Vocational Preparation Dental Studies course was initially recognised by the Head of the School of Para-Dental Studies in 1980. This was based on an awareness that no other existing course or programme provided the range of basic skills and knowledge an employer, such as a dentist, would find useful in a new assistant. Funding was sought and received from the Pre-Vocational programme in 1980 following consultation with the CES and industry representative bodies, in particular the Australian Dental Association (ADA). Meetings were convened with the ADA training committee and in particular concern was expressed that the new course might compete with the ADA's own course. This initial concern that the dental 'assistant' trained in the Vocational Preparation Dental Studies course might be competing with the dental nurse graduates of the Dental Hospital was allayed once the distinction between the two levels of training was clarified.

It was felt that the employment opportunities existed for assistants in the health related occupations in general, and the dental field in particular. The course would provide basic introductory skills, especially for young women, of a kind usually imparted by an employer, for example the individual dentist. The curriculum was developed for the 1980 course by two hourly paid lecturers, both dental nurses who drew on their many years experience in the industry. They were aware of the practices performed by dental assistants, and importantly, the expectations of dental employers.

4·3 OVERVIEW OF THE 1981 DENTAL STUDIES COURSE

In line with the broad educational objectives of the Vocational Preparation

programme, the Dental Studies course was intended to provide students with an introduction to various dental-related occupations (dental assisting, dental technology, dental therapy and hygiene), while at the same time providing broader vocational skill development, such as communication skills, interview techniques and job seeking skills.

The course was designed as a 10 week (25 hours per week) programme during which students were introduced to the following specific dental related fields: dental health, terminology, anatomy, assisting and materials, instruments and sterilization, radiography and technology. It was planned that on-the-job training experiences would be provided in the areas of dental reception, hygiene, therapy and surgery. In addition, a number of general development components were included in the course such as (a) training leading to a first aid certificate, (b) communication skills, and (c) some business studies related to office procedures and management.

The course developed in 1980 as a Pre-Vocational course was repeated in 1981 as a Vocational Preparation course with only minor refinements.

4·4 SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Lecturers responsible for co-ordinating and teaching the Dental Studies course adhered to a set pattern of student selection. In addition to satisfying general Departmental transition guidelines, (i.e. being within the 15-19 years age group, having registered with the CES, and being unemployed at least 4 months), students with at least year 11 secondary education were preferred. This was considered important because, (a) some of the course content was relatively technical, and (b) both the Enrolled Dental Nurse and Dental Assistant Association courses require a minimum year 11 qualification for enrolment. Students with lesser secondary education would be unable to take up these training options on completing the course. The lecturers were generally unwilling to include those students unless they demonstrated a high degree of interest in the course, and were prepared to accept that their employment options would be restricted mainly to the dental reception area.

Interviewing of all CES referred clients occurred at the College, and each applicant was interviewed individually. The final selection of course participants remained with the lecturers, given that the CES selected persons on the basis of screening of client records and made the referrals by means of letters of communication to the clients who then made telephone contact with the college.

Two problems in the selection procedure were cited by the lecturers.

- Many young people referred for interviews by the CES failed to keep appointments at the College.

- A proportion of those referred by the CES were considered by the lecturers to be unsuitable for the course, for reasons such as

  (i) inadequate educational background

  (ii) expressed desire on the part of the interviewees to not seek a job interview or to accept employment

  (iii) no apparent interest in any of the dental related occupations, once the interviewees understood the nature of the employment.

In some instances the lecturers felt obliged to accept students whom they considered were inappropriate for the course, because of CES pressure to fill classes from the list of clients provided to the College. One of the lecturers believed this problem stemmed from the fact that too few unemployed young people had been notified and referred by the CES. She believed that the open advertising approach used in 1980, should have been adopted. On that occasion students were recruited by a combination of open advertisement and CES referral. Persons interested in applying attended a meeting at the College at which time the essential features of the Programme were explained. They were then interviewed individually by a panel comprising the lecturer, a CES officer, and a project officer from the Transition Education Unit. This was thought to be relatively successful since many students came into the course through personal motivation and a genuine interest in the course, reinforced by one obviously co-ordinated selection process.[1] The arrangement for 1981 in disallowing the open advertisement option, often did not permit genuinely interested persons not referred by CES to enter the course.

4·5 STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Information on the students' characteristics was obtained from a questionnaire (Appendix B), and indicated that the courses generally succeeded in attracting the desired sub-groups of unemployed youth.

- Over 90% of students were aged between 17 and 19 years.
- Of the 27 students enrolled in dental studies classes in 1981, 26 were females.
- 86% of students had completed at least year 11 secondary education, and many had also completed year 12 or matriculation.
- Over 70% of all students had been unemployed for a total period less than 8 months since leaving secondary school, and a high proportion had held at least one job before enrolling in the course.

4·6 THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN THE COURSE

The Dental Studies course comprised an integrated programme of theory and

practical learning activities which provided a comprehensive introduction to the occupations related to dental assistance work as well as to broader career prospects.

The course consisted of three broad elements:

- introductory dental subjects,
- on-job-training and work observation, and
- personal development and career education.

4.6.1 INTRODUCTION TO GENERAL DENTAL SUBJECTS

General dental subjects were taught in the classroom situation, with each of the two principal lecturers taking particular subject areas or arranging dental experts to provide specialist instruction. The following general subject areas were covered: dental health, terminology, anatomy, assisting, materials, instruments, radiography and technology. Information was also provided on legal aspects of dental nursing, usually by the Head of School of Para Dental Studies.

The teaching programme included the use of overhead transparencies and dental models as well as lectures and practical demonstrations.

Student assessment was carried out by the lecturers at regular intervals during the course and usually took the form of 'feedback sheets' prepared by each student. Students were asked to summarize what they had learnt at the end of each subject area, and to indicate how interesting or useful the information had been. In this way, the extent of student understanding of each component of the course was ascertained and the results used for diagnostic purposes and for measurement of student achievement. This information also provided a basis for the lecturers' assessment of the effectiveness of the course, thus allowing modification of teaching methodologies and content.

4.6.2 ON-THE-JOB TRAINING AND WORK OBSERVATION

College staff considered that on-the-job training was an important part of the overall learning experience of the course. Students were usually placed in local Public Health clinics after six weeks of classroom activities, and visits were arranged with the Royal Adelaide Dental Hospital. Students were also encouraged to organise some of their work experience with local dental practices. This approach not only provided students with a wider range of work experience but also helped them to develop self-direction skills.

4.6.3 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Personal development activities in the main were provided by the two lecturers. Although there was an emphasis on developing communication and interpersonal skills, these skills were generally addressed in the context of job seeking or working in a dental related occupation. For example, students were instructed about the general appearance and behaviour expected of assistants employed in a dental surgery, and about specific ways of dealing with patients. The two lecturers' own extensive experiences as dental nurses provided the basis for this tuition.

4.7 THE OUTCOME OF THE DENTAL STUDIES COURSE

The outcomes of the courses are described in terms of student satisfaction and student employment destinations. Only for the first course was it possible to assess longer term outcomes because the second finished at the same time the project's field work period concluded.

4.7.1 STUDENT PERCEPTIONS AT THE END OF THE COURSE

Questionnaire data as well as student feedback sheets gathered by the lecturers indicated a high degree of student satisfaction with almost all aspects of the course.

- All except one student indicated that the course had been 'very or extremely interesting', and that the content of the course had been 'very useful and relevant'.

- Over 85% of all the 27 students believed that the course had given them 'sufficient skills to enter a particular job'.

- Many students responded favourably to the on-the-job training opportunities provided in the course. One student noted that visits to hospitals and clinics had been 'very useful... (it) had shown us the environment we would be working in and the conditions'.

- Students also commented that the course had helped in developing personal confidence, particularly with respect to seeking employment. In addition to forming friendships, many students felt that they had learnt to 'get along with people' and to communicate more easily.

- Importantly, the course had helped many students to clarify their vocational goals, and to form a commitment to the vocations addressed in the course. One student noted that she had 'definitely decided to choose dental nursing as my career'.

Although some students commented that some aspects of the course had been 'too theoretical' or 'a bit boring', the course was perceived as interesting, practically oriented and directly beneficial to locating employment in the dental area. Many students also indicated that they had formed a positive attachment both with the lecturers and with the College.

4.7.2 LONGER TERM STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

Students reacted favourably to the course at the time of completion. Since the first course had finished early in the year, attempts were made to follow up students to determine, (a) the extent of student employment, and (b) students' longer term assessment of the course experience.

Over 80% of all students were contacted and interviewed. The findings are summarised below.

- Seven students out of nine had located employment of some kind since completing the course, and all believed that the course experience had assisted them in their employment pursuits. Four students had found full-time employment as dental assistants, and three students were expecting to be accepted for further training as dental nurses.

- Students not currently employed indicated that they were still looking for employment in dental related occupations, particularly dental assisting. Several students had organised volunteer work for dental practices and dental clinics in order to gain further experience and additional skills. Those students who had found temporary and casual employment, such as waitressing and clerical work, remained keen to find permanent employment in the dental area. Most commented that the personal development and social skills acquired during the course were useful in any working environment.

A few students were disappointed that they had been unsuccessful in their employment pursuits, but felt the course had given them an advantage over other young people seeking similar employment. Others commented that the course experience had improved their ability to look for work and to conduct themselves at job interviews.

4.7.3 PERCEPTIONS OF DENTISTS EMPLOYING COURSE GRADUATES

Two dentists who had employed graduates from the course were asked to comment on (a) the usefulness and relevance of the skills acquired by the young people they had employed, and (b) their general views regarding the worth of the Dental Studies course as a training initiative.[1]

Both employers stated that they had chosen graduates from the course in preference to other applicants because of the fact that they had completed the Dental Studies course. They believed that the knowledge and skills acquired during the course were applicable to the tasks that they were expected to perform in a dental surgery. Both felt that the availability of young people with a basic understanding of dental procedures and materials would assist small dental practices in particular which may not have the time or resources to provide elementary training for new assistants.

4·8 MAJOR FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COURSE

In terms of the Vocational Preparation programme's main aims, the Dental Studies course was successful. It filled a previously uncatered for need in the semi-skilled training area, particularly for young women, and generally met its stated objectives of providing:

- basic skill development across a number of related occupations in an industry
- appropriate attitudinal development to assist young people in the transition to employment, and
- relevant career education to broaden the immediate and long term goals of students.

The following aspects of the Dental Studies course are highlighted as factors contributing to its effectiveness.

4.8.1 CLEARLY DEFINED TARGET GROUP

As noted earlier, the two main lecturers felt very strongly that the success or otherwise of each course depended on the quality of the students selected. For this reason considerable effort was taken in selecting educationally successful young people with an expressed interest in finding dental related employment. It seems certain that the lecturers' success in selecting students according to the selection criteria had a bearing on the quality of course outcomes.

4.8.2 STAFF MOTIVATION

An important factor contributing to the overall success of the course was the high commitment displayed by the main lecturers employed by the College. These lecturers assumed responsibility for planning and co-ordinating the course, interviewing and selecting students, placing students into appropriate on-the-job training locations, and teaching a considerable part of the course.

One lecturer emphasised that her role embraced more than lecturing and included a pastoral care responsibility. That is, she dealt with students' social and personal problems (e.g. delayed payments of allowances), as well as identifying and remedying students' learning difficulties related to the course.

There was also regular contact between students and this lecturer after the course had finished. Several students commented that the lecturer had been instrumental in helping them locate jobs in both the short term and

long term. The lecturer had become an important contact or resource person for students in their attempts to find employment, because of her extensive knowledge of the dental industry, and her personal concern for the students. Also, she was often able to give counsel and be a source of advice to students on numerous matters relating to job hunting, preparing applications for employment and preparing for interviews.

Although the lecturer indicated some concern about the extra responsibilities involved with the course, and felt that she occasionally became 'too involved' with the students, she felt that this was an unavoidable part of a course designed for unemployed youth. The time given was seen to be an essential professional requirement, especially as the students experienced problems not ordinarily associated with the bulk of TAFE students.

In any case, students responded positively to the lecturer's personal interest in their problems and concerns. This observation highlights a point relevant to the entire Vocational Preparation programme: that generally the success and effectiveness of each course can be influenced by the personal qualities of the lecturers involved, and in particular their sensitive appreciation of the needs of the young unemployed.

4.8.3 LOCATION OF THE COURSE IN AN ESTABLISHED SCHOOL WITHIN A COLLEGE

Lecturers involved with the course were encouraged to devote a considerable amount of time and effort to the course because they felt they had the full co-operation of the School of Para-Dental Studies in which they operated. In practical terms this meant recourse to senior administrative staff for direction and guidance, both in terms of course development and implementation, as well as support from full-time lecturers with regard to the use of the School of Dental Studies' resources and facilities. Not all lecturers providing Vocational Preparation courses in 1981 were so advantaged.

There were also positive benefits for the students who developed class identity for the duration of the course and felt accepted as a group within the school.

4.9 SUMMARY

In summary, the Dental Studies course constituted a well established and successful component of the Vocational Preparation programme, particularly for young women interested in certain traditionally female occupations.

The course's effectiveness in an administrative and organizational sense can be attributed largely to (a) the course's comfortable fit within a

college's school providing training programmes in similar occupations, (b) the courses tried and proven curriculum and (c) the use of the same part-time teachers who developed the course. Its success in terms of student satisfaction and employment can be credited in part to the dedication and professionalism of the lecturers teaching the course and in particular to their understanding both of the needs of unemployed youth and the training requirements of the dental related industries. The success also appeared contingent upon the employment opportunities in the relevant industries.

However, the course should not necessarily be treated as the model for courses in the Vocational Preparation programme. The programme, as discussed in chapters one and six, was intended to provide training particularly in occupations not specifically catered for elsewhere in the Department's offerings. The Dental Studies course drew close to the mainstream of the school in which it was conducted. Other courses, if they are to expand a given occupational field, need not be limited to a 'discipline' of one school of the parent college.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY : BASIC FARM SKILLS (NARACOORTE COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION)

5·1 INTRODUCTION

The Basic Farm Skills course was intended to provide vocational training in sectors of the agricultural industry for unemployed youth in two specified country locations. It was intended to provide basic skills and on-the-job training experiences for young people seeking either permanent or seasonal farm-hand employment. A ten week course was offered initially at Naracoorte College of Technical and Further Education in August 1981. A second shorter course (four weeks) modified in light of the Naracoorte experience, was staged at Yorke Peninsula College of Technical and Further Education in November. This discussion addresses the Naracoorte course, and draws upon information from the following sources:

- the lecturer responsible both for designing and teaching the course.
- the project officer responsible for the central administration of the Vocational Preparation programme.
- the Principal and Deputy Principal of Naracoorte College of Technical and Further Education.
- students who participated in the course.

5·2 EVENTS LEADING TO THE FUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BASIC FARM SKILLS COURSE

5.2.1 THE SUBMISSION FOR FUNDING BY NARACOORTE COLLEGE

In December 1980 the Principal of the College wrote to the Transition Education Unit seeking funding for an agricultural welding course in 1981. The need for the course was argued on the grounds that employment opportunities existed for young people with basic welding skills because of:

- State Government development initiatives in the metal trades,
- industrial development in the South East of South Australia and in Victoria, and
- potential employment positions with some of the fifteen small engineering firms in Naracoorte.

The Principal felt that the college was in an 'excellent position' to provide such a course because it already possessed an under-utilized welding workshop. A twenty week full-time course was envisaged to cater

for fifteen students, including one day a week tuition in communication skills and general vocational development.

5.2.2 RESPONSE FROM THE TRANSITION EDUCATION UNIT

In March 1981 the Vocational Preparation programme co-ordinator met with the Principal and Deputy Principal of the College to discuss the College's submission for a welding course, as well as other transition education possibilities.[1] The programme co-ordinator emphasised that the proposed welding course was too occupation-specific to be funded under the Vocational Preparation programme. The co-ordinator was also concerned that:

- no quantitative evidence had been gathered by the College to demonstrate that employment opportunities existed in the upper South East for young people with welding skills; and
- the agricultural welding course would not be attractive to unemployed females who constituted a high proportion of the client group in the area.[2]

It was suggested by the co-ordinator that the College develop a broader course concept, such as a Farm Hands course, which could also include a welding component.[3] As a consequence, a fourteen week Basic Farm Skills course proposal was later received and funded by the Transition Education Unit.

5.2.3 THE BROAD OBJECTIVES OF THE BASIC FARM SKILLS COURSE SPECIFIED IN THE COLLEGE SUBMISSION

The College's submission stated that the course was to 'prepare young people for the market requirements or primary producers in general, as well as occupations which incorporate an animal care component'.[4]

The course was intended to address the following topics: animal care; agricultural welding; driving instruction; crops and pastures; farm management; first aid; carpentry and handyman; and communication skills and other personal development. On-the-job training experience, drawing on the resources of the farming community in the Naracoorte area, was to be a major part of the course. Personal development elements, such as improving students' social and personal effectiveness skills were also to be included.

In general, the course was intended to provide basic skills and knowledge for unemployed young people not already working in the agriculture industry. It was to be much shorter and less comprehensive than the Farm Practice Certificate course already provided by the Department in many rural communities, and instead would prepare young people for immediate employment

in the agriculture industry, in particular casual and seasonal work created during lamb marking, shearing and harvesting periods. Such young people with a general but not intensive knowledge of farming procedures and practices would be more attractive to local farmers since the amount of time needed to train a new farm hand would be reduced. The course was also aimed at making students more constructive and effective in their approach to seeking farm related employment, much of which it was believed was not registered with the CES.

5·3 THE APPOINTMENT OF A LECTURER

Since the College had been unable to acquire locally a suitably qualified and experienced lecturer to teach the Basic Farm Skills course, it was necessary for the Transition Education Unit in July 1981 to employ an Adelaide-based lecturer on a contract basis to carry out this task. The lecturer chosen had several years experience in TAFE, including two and a half years with aboriginal education. At one time he had worked for the Department of Agriculture as a liaison officer with farming communities, and was experienced in teaching agricultural extension and farm management. The Basic Farm Skills course was, however, his first involvement with transition education.

The lecturer was expected to design a more specific Basic Farm Skills course curriculum from the college proposal and to implement the courses both at Naracoorte and Kadina.*

5·4 CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE LECTURER AND THE NARACOORTE FARMING COMMUNITY IN DEVELOPING A COURSE CURRICULUM

During July, a fortnight before the course commenced, the lecturer was sent to the Naracoorte region to develop what he regarded as a practical and workable Basic Farm Skills course curriculum relevant to the needs of the local farming community. He initiated a process of consultation with many relevant groups through:

- meetings with local farmers, arranged with the co-operation of the Department of Agriculture and the United Farmers and Stockowners Association.

---

* The lecturer was initially employed to teach two three month courses at Naracoorte and Kadina within a five month period by overlapping the two. To accomplish this it was intended that he would initiate the Naracoorte course, and while students were on work experience, the Kadina course would be established. The lecturer would then return to Naracoorte to finalize the course and then return to Kadina for the same purpose. Inevitable schedule problems at Naracoorte prevented this and the Kadina course was finally reduced to five weeks following after the completion of the Naracoorte course.

- a short questionnaire listing a range of skill areas, (e.g. lamb-marking, sheep dipping). This was distributed to farmers to gauge the types of skills preferred in new farm hands, and

- discussions with local agriculture-dependent business representatives in order to determine their views regarding the proposed course.

The lecturer spoke about the proposed course on local ABC radio and articles also appeared in the press. An effort was made, therefore, to encourage industry's contribution to the development of the curriculum prior to the commencement of the course. These activities provided opportunities for the lecturer both to locate equipment, materials and facilities for the course and to encourage industry support for and co-operation with the on-the-job training aspect of the course.

5·5 THE COURSE CURRICULUM DESIGNED BY THE LECTURER

Although the response of the farming community to the new course was in general disappointing,* the lecturer believed that data gathered could be used as a basis for designing the curriculum. It was found that the following basic skills were generally preferred by farmers: tractor operation and maintenance; fencing; lamb marking; drenching and dipping; header operation and welding.

As a result the lecturer designed the course to be practical and skill-based: upon completion of the course students would be able to perform a range of specified farm skills (e.g. drive a tractor, weld metal, use a chain saw). There would be little 'theory' and classroom-based teaching, except for the use of films to complement specific components of the course (e.g. fencing). Even personal development aspects, such as confidence building and self-direction skills, were to relate to the expectations of farmers (the development of positive attitudes, self-reliance and initiative) and to be approached through practical activities.

The proposed structure of the course integrated work observation and on-the-job training with skill learning, according to the following schedule:

- During the first two weeks students would visit farms as a group to observe a range of farming practices (e.g. lamb marking, fencing, hay making).

- This would be followed by several weeks of on-the-job training during which students would stay with farmers in a simulated employment situation.

---

* (for example, only seventeen questionnaires out of two hundred were returned to the lecturer, and many of these were not completed).

- Students would then return to the College for instruction in welding, fencing, farm machines, maintenance and first aid, using hourly paid instructors drawn from the local community and from the Open College of Technical and Further Education.

The original course concept conceived by the College, which was based on in-college lecture-based learning, was therefore developed by the lecturer into a course with a practical orientation based largely on off campus experiential learning.

5.6 THE COURSE EXPERIENCE

The implementation of the Basic Farm Skills course encountered many problems and complications which made it difficult for the course to meet its original aims and objectives. The students generally did not regard the course favourably and so it suffered from a high student attrition rate, and the course enjoyed little support from the local farming community. Three broad factors militated against the success of the course.

- an inability to locate sufficient numbers of motivated and reliable students for the course,
- severe disruption to the course's schedule because of wet weather affecting the farming practices in the region, and
- limited support for the course by the farming community which created difficulties for organizing work observation and on-the-job training opportunities for students.

These factors will now be discussed in some detail below.

5.6.1 DIFFICULTIES IN ATTRACTING A SUITABLE STUDENT GROUP

Students were recruited for the course by two means:

- CES referral of unemployed youth in the South East region in general, and the Upper South East in particular, and
- a small number of metropolitan students referred from the CES in Adelaide.

The first means involved the CES contacting fifty unemployed young people (twenty males and thirty females) and recommending that they attend a group information session conducted by CES officers and the lecturer. Of the eighteen replies, ten students were subsequently selected for the course. The second means provided the course with three additional students for

whom temporary accommodation had to be arranged by the lecturer.*

Of the thirteen students selected for the course, only eight arrived on the first day of the course. This remained the size of the student group throughout most of the course, despite the lecturer's attempts to recruit additional students. In general, any student indicating an interest in the course was accepted: 'selection' therefore could not take place because of the shortage of interested youth.

The attitude and behaviour of the student group brought many problems for the lecturer. A diary kept by the lecturer during the course revealed that many students

- were unreliable in attending the College,
- failed to keep boarding commitments, and
- misbehaved both during College teaching periods and while on work experience.

The lecturer complained that much of his time was spent appeasing farmers and others inconvenienced by the unreliable behaviour of students. At one point in his diary the lecturer expressed concern that student misbehaviour while on work experience was giving the Department as a whole 'a bad image' in the Naracoorte area. One student allegedly had dropped a bit down a bore shaft. Another was suspected of driving without authorization and damaging a farmer's utility. Whether these allegations were true or false may be irrelevant: the community's perceptions of the students became negative.

In general, the lecturer felt that students lacked enthusiasm or commitment to the course. He attributed this to the fact that

- many students were either too young (15-16 years) or mentally unprepared (because of long periods of unemployment) for a short but intense vocational course[s] and,
- many students had been pressured by parents and the CES into joining the course and weren't really interested in seeking farming-related employment.

This view was shared by senior staff at the College who believed that these problems were a reflection of the general characteristics of

---

* Accommodation also had to be provided for one student from Mount Gambier.

unemployed youth in the region. The College believed that the attitude and behaviour of students could not be attributed to the lecturer's teaching approach or attitude towards the students, and his attempts both to motivate students and structure practical off-campus learning experiences were praised.

5.6.2 DISRUPTION TO THE COURSE SCHEDULE BECAUSE OF POOR WEATHER

Wet weather, particularly at the beginning of the course, caused major changes in scheduling many parts of the course. Some planned activities, such as lamb marking, sheep drenching and sheep dipping, could not proceed and replacement activities had to be found, usually at extremely short notice. The lecturer originally had intended that students would spend the first two weeks visiting farms in order to gain first hand knowledge of farming practices and procedures. It was felt that this would generate student enthusiasm and interest in the skill development components scheduled later in the course. However, poor weather meant that the opening weeks of the course were devoted to classroom learning, with the lecturer often floundering to find suitably interesting activities. This outcome probably helped to undermine student interest and enthusiasm for the course. It certainly was the opposite of the lecturer's intentions.

These events highlight the potential difficulties in any outdoors courses of this kind which attempt to integrate the learning experience with the vagaries of normal farming practices. The course was heavily influenced by the many factors which normally affect farming operations, such as the weather, the schedules of individual farmers, and the farming season at the time the course was running. The course suffered from poor timing, falling between periods of lamb marking and hay harvesting. This meant that the lecturer had to be tentative and flexible in his approach, often organising activities on a day to day basis.

5.6.3 LIMITED SUPPORT FOR THE COURSE BY THE FARMING COMMUNITY

The negligible response of farmers to the lecturer's questionnaire has already been mentioned. Only a small number of farmers in the region were prepared to contribute to the course in terms of equipment, materials, and on-the-job training opportunities. The reasons for this are not clear, but farmer reluctance to become involved in a course for the young unemployed was a factor highlighted both by the course lecturer and by college personnel. There also appears to have been some confusion among many farmers concerning the relationship of the Basic Farm Skills course to the Department's Farm Practice Certificate programme.

In any case, limited farmer support for the course brought difficulties in organising sufficient on-the-job training locations for course participants. This task was made particularly difficult as it was generally not possible to place more than one student with each farmer (because students were to board with a farmer) and a diverse range of farming practices was covered

in the course. The lecturer found that many hours outside of normal teaching hours were devoted to the placement of students on work experience. Even so, fewer opportunities were provided than was desired.

5·7 STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE COURSE

A questionnaire completed by students at the end of the course proved to be of little use in determining why most students appeared to have reacted negatively towards the course. Only two students indicated that they had found the course 'enjoyable', a result less impressive than the response of students across the programme as a whole. Since the questionnaire did not include those students who had left during the course, an attempt was made to contact as many students as possible approximately three months after the course finished. Findings were as follows.

- Of the eight students who commenced the course, only four completed it.
- Two students initially selected for the course had found employment of some kind. One of these was an Adelaide-based student who found a job not related to farming. However, the other lived in Naracoorte and was working as a temporary farm hand.
- Three other students (not employed) stated that the course had been 'disappointing' and did not match their expectations. It was difficult to encourage these students to be more precise in their views. However, one Adelaide-based student who left the course after the fifth week found some of the practical skills learning worthwhile, but was disappointed that the course did not include an animal care component.

There was little evidence from the discussions with students which indicated that they had been assisted vocationally or in terms of personal development. Nevertheless, most students considered that at least some aspects of the course were worthwhile and enjoyable.

5·8 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE COURSE

The experience of the Basic Farm Skills course raises a number of issues of relevance to the provision of Vocational Preparation courses in the Upper South East and also in other country areas serviced by small TAFE colleges.

5.8.1 ESTABLISHING THE FEASIBILITY OF THE COURSE

The course seemed hamstrung by problems largely associated with (a) insufficient or inappropriate students for the pre-specified curriculum and (b) the lack of industry support. These two matters may well have been identified before the course was designed let alone

implemented. This prospect raises the question: how was the feasibility of the course established?

Strictly followed, the guidelines for funding Vocational Preparation courses required colleges to demonstrate the availability of both sufficient clients and adequate industry support (including adequate work experience projects for semi-skilled personnel in industry) for the course. The College in the case of the Basic Farm Skills course pointed out that it lacked both resources and personnel required for a thorough investigation of the course's feasibility in terms of,

- the degree of farming-related employment opportunities in the Naracoorte area,
- the extent of resources required or available for the proposed course, and
- the number of unemployed young people in the area for whom farm hand equipment held an interest.

Indeed, the capacity of most smaller colleges to mount an intensive investigation is doubtful. The problem no doubt is complicated by the geographically diffuse and occupationally diverse nature of some industries, especially those with marked seasonal variations in labour requirements.

Nevertheless, it might be argued that informal, less time and resource consuming methods could be sufficient to establish a prima facie case for a course. Phone calls to the CES, key representatives from the target industry or related industries (e.g. personnel in the local branches of stock companies) might well provide a strong indication of the likely extent of support. In the case of the Basic Farm Skills course the lack of both formal and informal investigations of the course's feasibility might be seen as a root cause of the implemented course's difficulties. Equally, it might be argued that the proposal for the course was based on (a) an original concern to mount a course more specialised than allowed under the Vocational Preparation guidelines and (b) ultimately an unsatisfactory compromise between those earlier concerns and the guidelines.

5.8.2 UTILIZING AN OUTSIDE LECTURER

There were some clear disadvantages in using a lecturer drawn from outside the college and its district to develop and teach a pilot course in a country region such as the Upper South East. In general these problems emanated from (a) the lecturer's lack both of established local contacts, and familiarity with the expectations of the local farming industry, and (b) unclear divisions of administrative responsibility between the College and the lecturer.

- **Familiarity with the local farming industry**

The lecturer's lack of experience within the locality required that he develop rapport with the local farming industry immediately prior to the commencement of the course. In contrast, a locally drawn lecturer would have been advantaged by a close working knowledge of the industry in the region. College staff therefore believed that a longer familiarization period before the new lecturer started would have facilitated industry co-operation and overcome the initial reluctance of farmers to support a new lecturer and an untried course. It may be noted that other Adelaide-based lecturers provided Vocational Preparation courses successfully in small country colleges (e.g. Food and Bar Skills at Riverland, Retail Sales at Gawler). However, these were lecturers who had taught the course previously and therefore were not developing it for the first time. Moreover, the courses addressed less geographically dispersed industries.

- Divisions of responsibilities between the college and the external lecturer

It has already been mentioned that much of the lecturer's time was devoted to the course's many co-ordination and administration tasks such as,

(i) locating and scheduling equipment and materials,

(ii) organizing hourly paid instructors to teach specific parts of the course (e.g. First Aid, welding and building),

(iii) finding on-the-job training locations for students, and

(iv) transporting students to and from widely scattered locations (for attendance both at the College and for their on-the-job training).

To a large extent these tasks were performed without the College's participation. It was generally assumed by College administrators that since the course was funded by external means, and was provided by a visiting lecturer, the main responsibility for developing and implementing the course was invested in the lecturer. In practical terms then there was little backup or relieving support from the College, particularly when problems arose, adding to the pressures placed upon the lecturer. In hindsight, it might be argued that given their greater knowledge of the area, the College's staff could have effectively rendered assistance in organising work experience for students or arranging for local farming specialists to provide instruction for aspects of the course. The College contended that with only two permanent staff members already co-ordinating 70 other courses, it was not possible or justifiable on a cost-benefit basis to allocate more man hours to the Basic Farm Skills course. Nevertheless, the lecturer felt that although based at the College, he did not feel part of the College. Equally, he was remote from head office and felt some concern that these problems were not appreciated or understood by those responsible for the central administration of the programme.

5.8.3 THE CLIENT GROUP

Both the lecturer and college staff cited that the 'poor quality' of the student intake was a major factor undermining the effectiveness of the course. Indeed the students generally appeared unable (or not inclined) to cope with the requirements of the course. However, the problem warrants closer attention because in other courses often severe problems were overcome through the efforts and responsiveness of lecturers, the colleges and perhaps the students.

Two lines of enquiry converge on the issue of 'poor quality' students.

- Recruitment: the pool of unemployed

The course was unable to attract enough students to meet the customary target of fifteen enrolments. College staff considered that the problem rested with the recruitment drive conducted by the CES: "too few students and not the right types" were contacted. While the CES may have failed to alert some potential students to the course, the success of a more concerted recruiting campaign remains doubtful for two reasons.

First, the number of unemployed youth in the locality appears to have been small (compared to colleges in larger rural towns). Furthermore, it is possible that a significant proportion resided far enough from the town to make daily transport to the College a problem.

Secondly, it is possible that of the unemployed youth in the locality many would not be interested in a basic farm skills course because with rural backgrounds they would have some familiarity with those skills and the farming industries. Perhaps more significantly, young women (who made up the greater proportion of unemployed in the locality) might not reasonably be expected to show interest in a type of occupation traditionally male rather than female.

- Fitting 'students to courses' or 'courses to students'

It is arguable that the lecturer's expectations of the students were too high given their age, length of unemployment, educational background and wider experience. Some students were living away from home so that they could attend the course. Indeed some came from metropolitan Adelaide. The requirement that these and others board with total strangers may have been too radical a move for some. In light of the students' backgrounds and the shock of temporarily translocating their place of residence there may have been a great need for more personal development and less occupational training than intended by the lecturer.

While the lecturer's approach to events within the course might be challenged, it can be argued that the very topic of the course was the problem. The students may well have preferred an entirely different

course: several professed a belief that their employment prospects in farming were extremely low. The initial rejection of the course by the bulk of young people who were contacted by the CES is consistent with this argument. It returns attention to the College's original proposal for a welding course: Would that type of course have been more attractive to the region's young unemployed? Equally, it might be asked how well other types of courses in the Vocational Preparation programme might have been accepted.

5.9 THE BASIC FARM SKILLS COURSE – VIEWED AS AN EXPERIMENT

Of the courses in the Vocational Preparation programme this course encountered the greatest difficulties. Viewed as an experiment it seems a particularly valuable exercise, testing several approaches to the complex issue of transition education in small country colleges. It signals the general need for perhaps more caution and more careful planning than required for courses in localities with a more concentrated population and a more diverse industrial base. This additional responsibility may strain the resources of the small college or at least call for streamlined procedures. It also highlights several specific issues:

- the difficulties associated with drawing students for a short full time course from outside their home locality;
- the administrative burdens of designing and implementing a course centred on 'on-job-training' in a geographically diverse industry. Transport and boarding are two significant implications, while rapport with industry seems an essential pre-condition.
- the sharing of responsibility between temporary lecturers from outside the district and colleges' permanent staff; and
- the difficulties of designing curricula before the nature of the client group is understood.

Perhaps the most fundamental issue emerging from the 'experiment' is the selection of the type of course for youth in rural areas with a low population density and with a narrow-based industry in which employment opportunities may be few or mostly seasonal. Should the course be directed at that industry or should it address more diverse industries and occupations with the likelihood that its graduates find work outside their home locality? Or if the course is to focus on the local industry, should it be broad-based (e.g. basic farm skills) or more specialised (e.g. welding or agricultural plant operation)?

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY : FIBREGLASS BOAT BUILDING (PORT ADELAIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION)

6·1 INTRODUCTION

The Fibreglass Boat Building course was a new initiative both in the fibreglass plastics industry and the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme and warranted attention as a case study for several reasons:

- the course provided training in an industry area not previously catered for in the 1980 Pre-Vocational programme or in any other course funded in the 1981 programme.
- The outcomes of the course were characterised both by comparatively high student employment, particularly in the industry concerned, as well as employer and student satisfaction with the content of the course.
- It was the only Vocational Preparation course terminated before its intended completion date because of high student employment.
- Despite success from several important viewpoints, the course nevertheless was controversial.
- Close co-operation between college staff and the industry was demonstrated, and, as a contribution to the course's success, highlights the importance to similar transition education courses.

6·2 THE COLLEGE SETTING

The course represented another initiative in the transition education field for the Port Adelaide Community College (TAFE). The College's overall contribution in 1980 and 1981 to the development of transition education courses, particularly in the semi-skilled occupational areas, warrants mention. In both the 1980 Pre-Vocational and 1981 Vocational Preparation programmes, various college staff in consultation with the Principal of the College were responsible for the development of courses in the retail selling and health assistant industries, as well as the course discussed here. These initiatives have been translocated successfully to other colleges.

The Principal and staff expressed a commitment to educational and training programmes for unemployed young people - a commitment based upon a concern regarding the high levels of youth unemployment in the localities served by the College. Discussions with the Principal and College lecturers revealed that in general the College's initiatives in transition education were brought about through significant interaction with community and

industry interests as well as the Commonwealth Employment Service. This was particularly evident in the development of the Fibreglass Boat Building course.

6·3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIBREGLASS BOAT BUILDING COURSE

The course was developed in 1981 by two general studies lecturers in consultation both with the CES and a fibreglass boat building employer. The need for the course was based on two assumptions:

- The fibreglassing industry in general and the 'pleasure craft' boat building industry in particular were experiencing a period of sustained growth. This growth suggested employment opportunities for appropriately trained young people.

- In the fibreglass boat building industry no other existing training programme provided the range of skills and knowledge necessary for familiarisation with fibreglass processing. Most of this training still rested with individual employers.

With respect to the second assumption, a lecturer involved with the development of the course believed that the working conditions involved tended to produce relatively high staff turnover, thus making the employer's training task more difficult. This was confirmed during discussions with an employer involved in the course who indicated that locating the right kind of staff was an ongoing problem, and high staff turnover (particularly those leaving soon after starting) had tended to discourage him from providing extensive training for new employees. For this reason, both the employer and the co-ordinating lecturer emphasised that the course should provide not only knowledge and skills, but also extensive on-the-job training to enable students to experience the working conditions in a fibreglassing firm.

The course was funded by the Department's Transition Education Unit after the CES confirmed that employment opportunities existed for young people in the fibreglass and plastics industries. The co-ordinator of the Vocational Preparation programme initially had hoped that students would acquire a broader range of skills than those specifically relating to fibreglass boat building.

In general, the planning procedures for the Fibreglass Boat Building course met the criteria specified for the funding of Vocational Preparation courses:

- college support and initiative,

- industry involvement and participation,

- CES support, and

- a demonstrated need for the course.

6.4 THE COURSE EXPERIENCE

6.4.1 SELECTION OF STUDENTS

The selection of students for the course appears to have been suitably rigorous and extensive, and entailed close co-operation between co-ordinating College lecturers and the CES. Thirty clients were referred by the CES and were interviewed individually by two lecturers; fifteen of these were finally selected.

Staff felt that the success of the course would depend on the characteristics and attitude of the students chosen. For this reason the lecturers adopted the following general criteria for selecting students:

- strong interest in pursuing employment in the fibreglass industry. For example, the following matters were probed at interview: reasons for wanting to enter the course, expectations of working in the fibreglass industry; the likelihood of finding the 'shop floor' working conditions acceptable.

- previous employment experience in a related industry.

Both points stemmed from the staff's understanding that working in the fibreglass industry often required new personnel (a) to adjust to unpleasant working conditions and (b) to function as part of a closely co-ordinated production team.

The College staff intended initially to attract some young women into the course and although two females were interviewed for the course, both eventually were rejected on the grounds that they would not be able to cope with the industry's difficult working conditions. One lecturer also voiced concern that young women chosen for the course would be trained in and directed to a predominantly male working environment and therefore would require more confidence and resilience than the two young women interviewed had displayed.

6.4.2 STUDENTS' BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS

Since no student questionnaires were returned from the class, no quantitative data concerning the social, educational and employment backgrounds of the students selected for the course were obtained. Discussions with a co-ordinating lecturer, the employer involved with the course, and some of the students, indicate that they were generally an older age group within the target range, and many had been unemployed eight months or longer.

6.4.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

The course was conceived with a view to providing both theory learning and suitable on-the-job training in a two part, 8 week programme.

- Theory Learning

  Students attended the College for the first four weeks of the course during which they were instructed in the theory underlying processes of fibreglass production, as well as other aspects of boat building such as welding and woodwork.

  Some of the instruction was provided by the College lecturers but most of the specific fibreglass theory was taught by an employer from the fibreglass boat building industry engaged as an hourly paid instructor. This included instruction in the principles and processes of fibreglass boat building construction - waxing, gellcoating, lay-up, laminating, finishing, moulding, woodworking and assembly - as well as gaining an appreciation of shop floor organisation and safety standards. Instruction leading to a St John First Aid certificate also was provided, as well as broader personal development components such as communication and job seeking skills.

- On-the-job training

  During the second half of the course, students as a group entered a fibreglass boat building factory for on-the-job training. Students were introduced to the various processes involved in fibreglass boat building construction, took part in the production process, and worked alongside the firm's employees. The lecturer who co-ordinated the course emphasised that this training component of the course involved considerably more than 'job observation', with students actually contributing to the various stages of production, e.g. waxing, moulding, assembly, and using machinery. This was confirmed in discussions with students. In general students spent three or four days working with other employees in each of the range of production processes in fibreglass boat building, and therefore gained a practical appreciation of the range of occupational skills.

  Many of the tasks overlapped and there was some flexibility in the placement of students around the factory. Students were given opportunities to explore more intensively those stages of the production process which held more interest for them. Students commented that they felt they were treated on an equal basis with other employees.

The College co-ordinator and the employer stated the balance and sequence in the two part curriculum represented the most appropriate approach to the course. It was important, they stressed, for students to be provided with an overview of the production process before entering an industrial location whereupon on-the-job training provided (a) practical reinforcement

of the theory and (b) realistic understanding of the conditions of employment in a fibreglass boat building factory.

6.5 THE OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE

The Fibreglass Boat Building course was terminated several weeks before its planned completion date because of a high number of students leaving the course to take up employment. No other course in the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme was terminated 'mid-stream' for this reason. Of the fifteen students initially enrolled in the course, twelve found full-time employment - seven with the boat building company which provided the work experience part of the course. Five others left the course for employment elsewhere (e.g. fitter and turner, storeman and packer). The remaining three had previously left because they were no longer interested in taking up work in the industry.

6.5.1 PERCEPTIONS OF THE CO-ORDINATING LECTURER

Discussion with the lecturer at the time the course was terminated revealed that in general he was satisfied with the outcomes of the course.[1] He believed the course had met its objectives of locating a group of unemployed young people and providing a package of skills, knowledge and vocational experience which together enabled them to find employment in fibreglassing industries. The fact that the employer had taken almost half of the student group, and was extremely impressed with the attitude and ability of the students, was regarded as a positive reflection on the course. The lecturer also felt that the employment success of the other students might have been attributable to the confidence gained through undertaking the course.

6.5.2 PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMPLOYER

The employer believed that the course had proven extremely useful both from his firm's viewpoint and in terms of benefits to the students. With respect to selecting and training staff, the course had helped to obviate a number of difficulties. In particular the course represented a more effective means of obtaining suitable new staff than the normal interview approach. The usual high turnover of staff complicated the process of providing skills and knowledge for new employees who, the employer believed, frequently were:

- ill-prepared for employment (particularly in secondary school),
- unrealistic in their expectations of the industry, and
- unable to assimilate to the working environment, not only in terms of the physical conditions but also the highly integrated production process.

The employer believed that the course contributed to the industry by allowing it to employ new staff with some skills in, and familiarity with the industry. Not the least the course discouraged the few who found the working conditions unsuitable and thereby reduced the likelihood of the student entering an occupation that they soon would reject. The course accelerated initial training of personnel who, moreover, had made a well-informed decision about their participation in the industry. From the employer's point of view attrition and resources for training alike were reduced - an important outcome from an employer's perspective.

6.5.3 STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

Two students were interviewed a week after the course concluded. Speaking for themselves and then on behalf of the five other students who gained employment with the firm which provided their on-the-job training, they claimed that the course had been very worthwhile. They confirmed the similar statements made by the lecturer and employer. To have obtained a job in the industry addressed by the course was for them the ultimate proof. However, it must be noted that the views of students who did not gain employment at all (or gained jobs in industries unrelated to the course) were not obtained.[3]

6.6 IMPLICATIONS

The teachers, the employer and (probably most) students considered that the course had been highly successful. Nevertheless, acclaim for the course was not universal. Central administrators believed that the course may have been meritorious in its own right; but its conformity to the Vocational Preparation programme's guidelines was questioned.[5]

6.6.1 OCCUPATIONAL RANGE

Vocational Preparation courses were intended to provide skills across a range of occupations within a particular type of industry (or over range of industries in a community). Thus, the courses were not intended to train students intensively for only one or a few narrowly defined occupations.

Central administrators were concerned that the course may have focused singularly on occupations within one corner of either the fibreglassing industry or the boat building industry.

That is, did the course ignore occupations, other than fibreglass processing, that apply to the boat building industry in general? Or, if the emphasis was to be on occupations in the fibreglass industries in general, did the course ignore occupations outside those in the boat building industry?

Although the relevance of the course's curriculum to occupations outside the fibreglass boat building industry was not determined, it might be argued that the skills provided in the course indeed did have wider applications in either or both the fibreglassing and boat building industries. For example, the curriculum documentation for the course specifies that in the last two weeks of the course (which closed prematurely) the students would have received instruction in oxy and arc-welding, wood-working and upholstery manufacture. These skills have applications beyond the occupations in fibreglass boat building.

The course's on-the-job training was confined to one firm, drawing some criticism that this part of the course was too narrow in its base. However, before that criticism could be endorsed, it would be necessary to demonstrate that the skills and processes in that one firm were peculiar to that firm. That is, it can be argued that aspects of the operations of one firm can be representative of those of other firms and therefore that training in one firm is not necessarily too narrow.

6.6.2 TRAINING FOR KNOWN 'JOB VACANCIES' VERSUS 'JOB STIMULATION'

The majority of students employed immediately after the course gained positions in the one firm - the firm which provided their on-the-job training. This outcome drew the criticism that the course was providing a special service to one employer and even that it was providing the training that employers themselves should provide.

If indeed the employer participated in the course with the intention to exploit the opportunity in that way, then the criticism would appear valid. However, there was no indication that this was so. Rather, the employment outcomes of the course might more appropriately be seen as a fortuitous development for both employer and student - in effect a stimulation which opened job vacancies which otherwise would have lain dormant. In any event, the criticism might be levelled against any course in which a very high employment rate was obtained. Since Vocational Preparation courses have been intended to provide training for occupations with reasonable employment prospects and without training provided specifically in mainstream courses, high employment rates in only a few firms or industries might well be expected. From this discussion it appears then that there is a case for <u>not</u> dismissing courses which are successful according to the students, lecturers and employers, but which tend to compromise the Vocational Preparation programme's guidelines.

This course exemplifies the potential conflicts between the views of the clients (students and indirectly, employers) and interpretations of the programme's guidelines. The issue of broad-based versus narrow-based training becomes a central concern. It may be necessary for individual colleges or the Department as a whole to decide whether

- a cautious approach maximizing the programme's adherence to its guidelines should be adopted (perhaps at the expense of the clients' preferences);

- a bolder approach following most closely the clients' preferences should be adopted (perhaps within the spirit rather than the literal interpretation of the guidelines); or

- the guidelines themselves should be altered.

CHAPTER 7
ADMINISTRATION

7·1 INTRODUCTION

The Vocational Preparation programme provided the most complex and heterogeneous set of full-time courses funded by the Commonwealth in the 1981 Transition Education Programme. Its twenty-nine courses displayed the greatest curricular diversity insofar that twelve quite discrete types were staged. Some were designed and implemented for the first time in 1981. Furthermore the courses varied in duration, were implemented in eighteen different locations and were offered intermittently throughout the year.

This chapter deals with the wide range of administrative arrangements necessary to operate such a diverse set of courses.

7·2 THE BROAD ADMINISTRATIVE PATTERN

The programme was administered as a discrete component of the centrally controlled Transition Education programme. That is, it was managed neither as an offshoot of the other programmes of full-time Transition Education courses nor as a derivative of mainstream programmes run by or through the colleges. Within the programme each course was treated as a discrete project - funded and staffed independently from the others. Control over funding, staffing (full-time but not part-time lecturers), locations of courses and curriculum (approval but not design) rested with the Transition Education Unit. However, the colleges individually controlled many other aspects of the administration. The discussion therefore is divided into two main sections, the first dealing with the role of head office and the second with the colleges.

7·3 CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Responsibility for the 1981 Transition Education programme was vested in the Director of College Operations. Centralised administration was conducted by the Transition Education Unit whose Head oversighted the activities of project officers each co-ordinating particular programmes. The Head of the Transition Education Unit also disseminated policies and participated in negotiations on matters affecting the range of transition education courses. However, the main administrative responsibility for the Vocational Preparation programme rested with one project officer once the Commonwealth had supplied its funds and conditions for their disbursement. The officer henceforth is referred to as the co-ordinator.

Other sections of the Department contributed less directly to the programme's administration. For example, in accordance with their normal duties the Finance and Personnel Sections provided accounting and staffing services respectively.

7.3.1 THE ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE OF THE CO-ORDINATOR

The broad types of administrative functions performed by the programme co-ordinator related to the formal processing of course proposals for funding, and to support services for colleges providing courses. In performing both these functions, the programme co-ordinator interacted with (a) senior Departmental administrators, (b) personnel in support sections of the Department (e.g. Training and Development Branch), (c) college administrative staff, (d) representatives from local community, industry and government agencies such as the CES and (e) students and course lecturers.

- Proposals for courses

  The co-ordinator was responsible for vetting submissions presented to the Transition Education Unit by individual colleges seeking funds for a proposed Vocational Preparation course. The co-ordinator was required to evaluate the submissions in terms of (a) the Commonwealth's guidelines, (b) costing, and (c) the general parameters laid down for the programme by the Transition Education Unit (see chapter three). Submissions meeting the criteria were endorsed by the co-ordinator and submitted through the Head of the Transition Education Unit for formal approval by the Director of College Operations.

  However, this formal processing was not the only function which the co-ordinator performed in regard to proposals for courses. In many cases the co-ordinator assisted colleges in the preparation of submissions and even initiated some colleges' deliberations on particular courses which she saw as feasible and desirable in terms of the programme's overall rationale and objectives. When a college's submission did not conform to the guidelines the co-ordinator usually assisted the college to revise its proposal. For example, an original course submission for a welding course at Murray Bridge was rejected because the occupational group addressed was too narrow for the programme guidelines, but a second submission seeking a Varied Trades course, developed in consultation with the co-ordinator, was approved unchanged. (Chapter five, section 5.2.1 discusses a similar incident.)

  The co-ordinator visited colleges and discussed proposed courses with staff and in some cases the local CES, lending not only her expertise with the Vocational Preparation guidelines but also her several years experience with transition education, particularly the Pre-Vocational courses in the 1980 programme. This field contact was as an essential part of her administrative duties - informing colleges and in turn acquainting her with the details of the programme's setting and implementation. It took place most frequently with pilot courses or occasions where a course trialled in one college was to be implemented for the first time in another.

- Staffing for some courses

Three types of courses (Basic Farm Skills, Retail Sales, and Food and Bar Service) were repeated in more than one college. The co-ordinator arranged the temporary appointment of three lecturers to service these courses. These lecturers were called on to teach their specialised course particularly in those colleges which sought that type of course but which lacked staff conversant with it. Nonetheless, courses developed or taught by the contract lecturers were administered through the host colleges.

This approach to staffing promoted some consistency across the courses thus reducing the administrative duties for permanent staff within colleges. Nevertheless it created one significant problem. Successive deliveries of each of the three courses were required for maintaining the contract lecturers' continuity of employment. On several occasions they were required to move to a different location to teach a course. While this arrangement was inconvenient for the lecturers, it also placed them in no man's land betwen Head Office and the College. That is, although they were ultimately accountable to Head Office, their day-to-day operations were a college responsibility. Their conditions differed from those of both permanent and part-time college lecturers who were generally responsible to one person within the college line management.

- On-going support for staff

The co-ordinator was the key central administration contact person for all field staff. Consequently, staff turned to the co-ordinator for assistance on a wide range of administrative, professional and even industrial matters. These included:

(i) advice on procedures (and sometimes direct participation in) the selection of students,

(ii) provision of information about the protocol and procedures for liaising with CES, the Department of Social Security and others,

(iii) organization of staff development activities in concert with the Training and Development Branch,

(iv) compilation of statistics requested by Head Office, and

(v) classification and processing of claims for travel and accommodation.

Again, the co-ordinator's administrative contribution was greatest for courses which were not being repeated in the same college.

- Monitoring the programme

The co-ordinator was responsible for monitoring the programme as a whole and for assessing the effectiveness of the individual courses.

This accountability role entailed:

(i) regular contact with colleges providing courses,

(ii) compilation of financial statements, and

(iii) compilation of records of student enrolment and retention.

Assistance for these tasks was provided by the officer in the Transition Education Unit responsible for the collection of statistics. The evaluation team and other sections of the Department also assisted.

7.4 ADMINISTRATION IN COLLEGES

All Vocational Preparation courses were delivered through the TAFE colleges. Some were taught mainly on the college campus; others were taught mainly in community facilities or industrial sites.[1] But in all cases the college provided the administrative channels. The discussion now turns to the administrative role of the colleges. It notes the types of personnel who contributed and outlines the tasks performed by them. However, the pattern of administrative tasks and personnel who performed them varied greatly throughout the Vocational Preparation programme. The discussion therefore presents a range of administrative approaches which together cover the broad spectrum of Vocational Preparation courses.

7.4.1 THE PERSONNEL

Personnel in the following positions contributed to the administration of Vocational Preparation courses:

- The Principal
- Middle-level management : substantive positions (Deputy Principal, Head of School, Deputy Head of School or Senior Lecturer.)
- Middle-level management : temporary positions (Transition Education Co-ordinators, appointed at Lecturer or Senior Lecturer levels on an annual basis.) Their duties comprised co-ordinating transition education activities within one or two colleges. This occurred in only a few colleges.[2]
- Lecturers : permanent staff (Lecturers with predominantly teaching duties in colleges' mainstream programmes.)
- Lecturers : temporary, full-time Vocational Preparation instructors (Some were employed for only one course; others were employed for a longer period to teach the course in different colleges.)
- Lecturers : temporary, part-time Vocational Preparation instructors (Employed solely for teaching a substantial part of a course on Hourly Paid Instructor conditions.)
- Clerical Staff (Permanent and temporary officers appointed to a College.)

7.4.2 ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

The following administrative tasks associated with Vocational Preparation courses were undertaken by personnel attached to colleges.

- Establishing the feasibility of a course

  Although usually carried out in consultation with the programme co-ordinator, it was the responsibility of colleges to demonstrate the need for the course by establishing,

  (i) the size of the potential client group (in consultation with the CES),

  (ii) the potential employment opportunities in the industry or geographical location involved, and

  (iii) the endorsement of the course concept from industry or representative bodies and associations.

- Preparing and submitting a proposal for a course

  Proposals submitted to Head Office for funding a course required information on the course title, aims, curriculum, starting date and duration, estimated costs and feasibility. Field staff therefore had to collate this information and present it to Head Office. In some cases where proposals were rejected, revised proposals were drawn up and re-submitted. This process usually entailed negotiations between those staff and the programme's co-ordinator.[5]

- Curriculum development

  Some courses were introduced as pilot courses. Others had been piloted previously by other colleges. Depending on the status of the course staff either had to design an appropriate course and pilot it or adopt an extant course to fit in with a new context. It was considered an advantage to employ the services of a lecturer who had been involved in the pilot phase in the adaptation of a course into a new setting.

- Negotiating funding and administering a course budget

  While the extent of funding was determined in consultation with the programme co-ordinator, colleges were responsible for the disbursement of funds directed to them for the courses.

- Arranging accommodation for a class

  Colleges were responsible for allocating classrooms and other facilities for the course. Some courses' classes were conducted on-campus; others such as Food and Bar Skills made extensive use of off-campus locations and facilities.

- Obtaining material resources

  Teaching materials were provided by the colleges and were funded either (a) from college resources, (b) from the course budget, or (c) by the wider community.

- Employment and induction of part-time instructors

  Hourly Paid Instructors were employed for teaching parts of many courses. Locating suitable staff, arranging their induction, providing support and ensuring adequate employment conditions were college responsibilities.

- Correspondence with Head Office

  College staff were expected to supply statistical information to Head Office during the running of the course. Statistical data such as enrolment figures and student attendance and attrition rates, was required separately by the Transition Education Unit and the Department's Statistics Section.

- Recruiting students

  Recruitment of students was generally the responsibility of the CES. However colleges contributed in varying degrees to this exercise. Some colleges, in co-operation with the CES, arranged advertisements on local press and radio. The colleges (or CES) handled enquiries generated by the advertising campaigns.

- Selecting applicants for the course

  Colleges were responsible for interviewing clients referred by the CES, and selecting candidates for the courses. The CES sometimes participated in this exercise. (See Chapter 8). This task followed the recruitment process on occasions where the group of applicants exceeded places in the course.

- **Registering students and informing CES**

  In addition to paper work customarily involved in enrolling students in a course, college staff attended to the informational requirements of CES and Department of Social Security. These tasks were unique to transition education courses because of student allowances being specific to the programme. A secondary feature was the required full-time attendance for all students which in itself meant that special recording forms had to be prepared and data recorded on a day-by-day basis.

- **Negotiating off-campus course activities**

  Arranging off-campus activities for students was a major administrative task for colleges in many courses. All courses funded under the programme included on-the-job training or work observation components, and college staff were responsible for (a) identifying suitable placements, (b) negotiating them with employers and community agencies, and (c) maintaining rapport and liaison with those parties.

- **Organising outside specialist services**

  Most courses used the services of specialist instructors (e.g. St. Johns instruction leading to a first aid certificate). While many of these were obtained under Hourly Paid Instructor arrangements, some courses also drew on college permanent staff and voluntary input provided by outside parties. Provision of these services entailed negotiation and co-ordination by college staff.

- **Evaluation requirements**

  College staff assisted the evaluation project team by administering questionnaires, participating in interviews and supplying various types of data. The questionnaire-survey added most to the colleges' administrative load.

- **Pastoral care**

  In many cases staff took on some pastoral care responsibility for their students. They pointed out the often severe personal problems and predicaments faced by individuals. They considered that some attention to those problems was essential if the students were to gain from the course or even to persevere with it. Financial, social and emotional problems, along with pressing concerns over accommodation, transport and other basic living conditions presented one dimension of the pastoral care task. Assistance with identifying job vacancies and preparing applications and approaches to interviews provided another dimension. Transactions with welfare agencies provided another. Much of the pastoral care could be construed as either a component of

teaching duties or a personal undertaking by staff. Nevertheless, many organisational tasks were associated with those events and therefore added to the administrative loads of field staff.

7.4.3 FACTORS DETERMINING ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The following factors were identified as the major determinants of colleges' administrative arrangements for the courses. Combinations of these factors are used in section 7.4.4 to define approaches each characterizing the administration of different groups of courses in the 1981 programme.

- Development status of the course curriculum

  As noted earlier, the curricula of courses implemented in 1981 were either

  (i) entirely new to the Department's transition education programmes, or

  (ii) had been established in earlier pilot courses.

- Relationship between the course's occupational field and the college's organisational structure

  The field of training (identified by the occupations addressed in the curriculum) in the case of some courses matched one of the existing sub-structures (such as a School) in the college's organisation. For example, the specific occupations addressed in the Dental Studies course accorded with the general occupational field embraced by the School of Para-Dental Studies (in the Gilles Plains Community College (TAFE)) which housed the course. Expertise relevant to the course therefore rested within a particular organisational section of the college.

  Other courses did not really match the college's fields of training in general or a particular sub-structure. In some cases the course's occupational field was not addressed by any part of a college's customary programme. For example, the Food and Bar Service course was conducted at three country colleges none of which had a 'School of Food and Catering' function or even its close equivalent.

  No clear cases in which the occupational fields of a course cut across the organisational divisions in a college were identified. However, this arrangement might occur in future courses. For example, a Basic Farm Skills course conducted in a college with separate sub-structures for 'rural studies' and 'automotive' could be centred in the former but draw on the latter for instruction in, say, tractor maintenance.

- Main form of staffing

Although instruction in Vocational Preparation courses typically was provided in part by several part-time instructors each taking a small portion of the overall course, the main form of staffing varied across the programme. The main teaching responsibility in a course resided with one of the following:

(i) a lecturer from the college's permanent teaching staff,

(ii) a full-time temporary lecturer employed at the college specifically for the course,

(iii) one or two part-time lecturers employed specifically for the course and to teach or supervise the bulk of the course,

(iv) a succession of part-time instructors, co-ordinated by a college based lecturer, with none taking responsibility for orchestrating the entire series of events in the course.

- The experience of the main instructor or lecturer

The following areas of expertise and experience held by the main instructor or lecturer influenced administrative arrangements and varied across courses.

(i) Prior experience with the course

Some teachers had conducted the same course previously. They therefore were familiar with the curriculum and dealing with transition education students. Others had not taught the course beforehand.

(ii) Familiarity with the industry

Generally the main teachers had considerable experience of the industries or occupations covered in their course. However, in some cases the main teacher lacked that experience and instead drew the relevant expertise into the course through the agency of several part-time instructors or through contact with persons associated with the 'on-the-job training' phase.

(iii) Familiarity with the community

As the courses entailed on-the-job training as well as work observation, some familiarity with the community was required. The community provided resources for the course, particularly in the form of voluntary and hourly paid instructors. Also liaison with industry and other agencies was required for (a) establishing the feasibility of the course and, for some courses, (b) directing the students' (or graduates') job-hunting activities. While most lecturers or instructors were drawn from the college's staff or from the community (and therefore were familiar with the relevant parties in the locality), some were not. Notably, the lecturers employed on contract to teach the

same course in different colleges were not nearly as conversant with the local community as locally-derived staff could be expected to be.

(iv) Familiarity with college procedures

Familiarity with the college administrative procedures varied according to whether or not the main teacher had worked in the college before. The extent of their experience therefore was a factor influencing their capacity to assume responsibility for certain administrative tasks.

(v) The experience of the college

Colleges could be expected to have an extensive understanding of the resources and agencies in their local community. Nevertheless, the colleges varied in regard to:

- the amount of experience staff had with full-time transition education courses in general and the Vocational Preparation course in particular, and
- knowledge of specific industries or occupations addressed by the course.

7.4.4 ADMINISTRATIVE APPROACHES

According to its characteristics in terms of the five factors in section 7.4.3, each course in 1981 Vocational Preparation programme fell into one of nine administrative categories. These nine categories are described and discussed in detail in Appendix E, under the headings:

- Category A - The College takes up a course developed in a different college.
- Category B - Part-time staff repeat the college's course
- Category C - College staff repeat a course
- Category D - Generalist permanent staff pilot a course
- Category E - A visiting lecturer repeats a course conducted previously elsewhere
- Category F - The visiting lecturer pilots a new course
- Category G - Part-time instructors repeat a course conducted previously elsewhere
- Category H - College staff stage a course developed elsewhere
- Category I - Part-time lecturer(s) teaches a course developed elsewhere.

It should be noted that 1981 categories are not exhaustive, e.g. in no case in 1981 did specialist college staff pilot a course.

The fifteen administrative duties previously discussed are distributed across various levels of college management and teaching for each of the nine administrative categories. Table 3 refers to courses which fitted a discipline of the college and thus administrative categories A, B, and C only were applicable. Table 4 refers to courses which did not fit a discipline of the college and so administrative categories D, E, F, G, H, and I were applicable.

By classifying a particular course in one of the categories A to I it is possible to ascertain from the tables which administrative approaches were employed for that category of course in 1981. Discussion in 7.4.5 provides guidance as to the effectiveness of the different approaches.

7.4.5 IMPLICATIONS

It is clear that different course circumstances required different administrative approaches. Flexibility to tailor administrative approaches to particular course circumstances, it is suggested, should be maintained so that the most appropriate approaches may be applied to particular situations.

Commonalities

While there was a diversity of administrative patterns in the Programme, there were also aspects which were common to all courses.

(i) The administrative 'input' by field staff (whether permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time) was substantial.

(ii) Permanent staff, particularly the principal and middle-management officers, were ultimately responsible for the college's administration of the course. In practice their active contributions varied, generally complementing the expertise and experience of the individual(s) responsible for the bulk of the teaching in the course. In almost all cases the permanent staff established the feasibility of the course and prepared the submissions for funding.

(iii) Teachers who provided the bulk of the instruction also provided the bulk of the pastoral care services. That is, the rest of the college staff (even in colleges staffed with a student counsellor) generally did not become directly and extensively involved with students' problems.

TABLE 3

ALLOCATION OF DUTIES TO COLLEGE PERSONNEL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE CATEGORIES IN THE 1981 PROGRAMME WHERE THE COURSE FITTED A DISCIPLINE OF THE COLLEGE

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS	LEVEL OF COLLEGE PERSONNEL				
	PRINCIPAL	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	PERMANENT LECTURER	PART - TIME INSTRUCTOR	CLERICAL STAFF
FEASIBILITY STUDY	**A** B	**A** **B** **C**	**A**		
SUBMISSION FOR FUNDING	**A** B	**A** B **C**	**A**		
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT		B **C**	**A**	**B**	
FINANCE	**A** B	**A** **B** **C**	**A**	B	A
CLASS ACCOMMODATION		**A** **B** **C**	**A**	B	
MATERIAL RESOURCES		**A** B **C**	**A**	B	
H.P.I. ARRANGEMENTS		**A** **B** C	**A**	B	A
HEAD OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE	**A**	**B** **C**	**A**	B	
STUDENT RECRUITMENT	**A**	**A** B **C**	**A** C		
STUDENT SELECTION		**A** B **C**	**A** C		
STUDENT REGISTRATION		**A** B **C**	**A**	**B**	A
OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES		B **C**	**A**	**B**	
SPECIAL SERVICES		B C	**A**	B	
EVALUATION PROJECTS		B C	**A**	**B**	
PASTORAL CARE		C	**A** C	**B**	

NOTE : A, B, C refer to administrative approaches described in section 7·4·4 .
A, B, C indicates major administrative responsibility .

TABLE 4

ALLOCATION OF DUTIES TO COLLEGE PERSONNEL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE CATEGORIES IN THE 1981 PROGRAMME WHERE THE COURSE DID NOT FIT A DISCIPLINE OF THE COLLEGE

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS	LEVEL OF COLLEGE PERSONNEL				
	PRINCIPAL	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	PERMANENT LECTURER	CONTRACT LECTURER	PART - TIME INSTRUCTOR
FEASIBILITY STUDY	D **E** **F** G H	**I** **G**	**D**		
SUBMISSION FOR FUNDING	D **E** **F** G **H** I	**I** **G**	D		
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT		G	**D** H	**E** **F**	**F** **G**
FINANCE	D **E** **F** G H	**I** G	D	F	G
CLASS ACCOMMODATION	**E** H	**I** **G**	**D**	**E** **F**	G
MATERIAL RESOURCES		I G	D H	E **F**	G
H.P.I. ARRANGEMENTS		**I** **G**	**D** H	E **F**	G
HEAD OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE	D **E** F G H	**I** **G**	D	E **F**	G
STUDENT RECRUITMENT	D E	I G	**D** **H**	**E** **F**	G **I**
STUDENT SELECTION	D E	I G	**D** **H**	**E** **F**	G **I**
STUDENT REGISTRATION	E	I G	D H	F	G
OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES	**E**	**I** G	**D** **H**	**E** **F**	**G** I
SPECIAL SERVICES		I G	**D** H	**E** **F**	**G**
EVALUATION PROJECTS		I G	**D** H	**E** **F**	G
PASTORAL CARE			**D** H	**E** **F**	**G** I

NOTE : D, E, F, G, H, I refer to administrative approaches described in section 7·4·4 .
D, E, F, G, H, I indicates major administrative responsibility .

- **The balance between new courses and old courses**

Only three entirely new courses were developed during 1981. The administrative approaches in 1981 therefore were predominantly mechanisms for replicating or at most adapting courses. It was argued earlier that the Vocational Preparation programme was intended to be responsive to occupational prospects within a range of industries or in a specific geographical location. One or a few courses could feasibly saturate an industry's or locality's labour vacancies. This raises the question of the continuation of a course at a given location. Courses should not outlast their usefulness. Once labour requirements are met the course should be stopped.

The translocation of courses was practised extensively in 1981, and this suggests that the Vocational Preparation programme needs to be replenished with new courses in 1982-83. It should be remembered that the creation of pilot courses represents a more formidable assignment than replicating or adapting existing courses for the following reasons:

(i) Feasibility study is required in that labour vacancies should be shown to exist for defined occupational and industrial areas.

(ii) Curriculum development is a major task. Administrative action (curriculum documentation, endorsement or approval through either Head Office or local industry) is required along with instructional materials preparation.

(iii) suitable off-campus activities and special services must be negotiated and co-ordinated.

It is noted that the Curriculum Development Branch gave particular attention to Vocational Preparation courses in 1981. This action led to the consolidation of courses previously piloted in 1980. While this contribution by Head Office is most beneficial to the formalisation and promulgation of a course curriculum, work needs to be done by lecturers to develop lesson notes and other teaching materials. Given such a backlog, there is a case for providing additional resources to develop pilot courses. The appointment of temporary staff a week to a fortnight before a new course commenced was an important precedent set during 1981.

- The predicament of the mobile lecturer

Employment of a contract lecturer to teach the same type of course in successive colleges brings experience of the course to the college. But he or she often lacks the local knowledge essential for some administrative tasks. In these cases it would seem that the college's permanent staff should assume the particular responsibility, complementing the lecturer's expertise with their working knowledge of the local community.

- The experienced temporary and part-time teachers

It would seem reasonable for a temporary or part-time teacher to have

minimal administrative responsibility in view of the fact that their major obligation is to teaching. This would certainly be true for courses where the teacher is unfamiliar with the college's operations and with the local community or industry. Even so, some temporary or part-time staff effectively shouldered a substantial part of the administrative workload during 1981. Their input was particularly useful in matters concerning the day to day operations of the course. In these cases, permanent staff were preferred to adopt a less direct role realising that the lecturers concerned were experienced enough to handle these administrative requirements without diminishing the quality of their teaching.[a]

CHAPTER 8

THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STUDENTS IN THE VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME

8·1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is four-fold:

- to summarize the procedures and practices adopted by participating colleges in recruiting students for 1981 Vocational Preparation courses,
- to relate these procedures to relevant Commonwealth transition education policy and to particular Departmental guidelines.
- to highlight and discuss various areas of concern and other difficulties experienced by colleges and the Commonwealth Employment Service in locating students for Vocational Preparation courses.
- to outline the major issues arising from the methods of student recruitment in the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme and the implications for future programmes.

The data used in this chapter was derived from the following sources:

- student enrolment and monthly return figures supplied by participating colleges to the Department's Transition Education Unit,
- discussions with college administrators and lecturers, and selected CES personnel, involved in recruiting students for Vocational Preparation courses, and
- discussions with students who participated in courses.

8·2 COMMONWEALTH AND DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES WITH RESPECT TO RECRUITING STUDENTS FOR TRANSITION EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

In discussing the recruitment of students in 1981 Vocational Preparation courses, it is necessary to describe briefly both relevant transition education guidelines established by the Commonwealth Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs (now the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations), and the specific guidelines established by the Department's Transition Education Unit.

8.2.1 COMMONWEALTH TRANSITION EDUCATION GUIDELINES

Commonwealth transition education guidelines established in 1980 include

three broad elements relating to student recruitment:

- A significant proportion of enrolments for all TAFE transition education courses would be drawn from teenagers aged between 15 and 19 years and registered as unemployed for a minimum of four months with the Commonwealth Employment Service.

- The CES would be involved in the referral of registered unemployed young people to TAFE institutions providing transition education courses, and would be given an opportunity to participate in the selection procedures adopted by colleges.

- Preference would be given to unemployed young people considered 'at risk' in the youth employment market, in particular the longer term unemployed and others likely to experience difficulty in entering the work force.

The Commonwealth's desire for CES participation in the recruitment of students in transition education courses was conceived as part of a broader process of consultation between the CES and TAFE authorities to ensure that:

- courses appropriate to the needs of young unemployed people would be developed under the transition education programme,

- young people within the 15 - 19 years target group most likely to benefit from participation in such courses would be selected, and

- a continuing relationship would be maintained between the CES and course participants to provide students with both employment counselling and assistance for job placements on completion of the course.

8.2.2 DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS FOR VOCATIONAL PREPARATION COURSES

Commonwealth transition education guidelines formed the basis of Departmental policy for the recruitment of students for all transition education programmes. The Department's Transition Education Unit developed recruitment guidelines in 1981 to cover all major programmes under its direction.

The recruitment guidelines took account of the scope and degree of specificity of training in the range of programmes provided, from Foundation courses designed for students who were undecided in their vocational goals, to Pre-Vocational courses for students with employment goals in specific occupations.

Within this broad framework, the Vocational Preparation programme was expected to draw clients from a large middle ground of the 15 - 19 year target group. That is, unemployed young people of at least modest

educational achievement, with relatively focused vocational goals, although not as specific as those of students intended for Pre-Vocational courses.

8.3 THE INVOLVEMENT OF COLLEGES AND THE CES IN RECRUITING STUDENTS

For colleges, consultation and collaboration with the CES was the major means by which students were located for Vocational Preparation courses. Data gathered by the Transition Education Unit from college monthly returns, though incomplete, indicates that approximately 1 500 people were contacted by the CES and referred to TAFE colleges for selection. Of the 435 students who participated in the programme, only a small proportion were derived from other means such as newspaper advertisements. This occurred when the CES was unable to locate sufficient students, or where the student attrition rate for a particular course was unusually high and quick alternative means had to be used to replenish classes."

In general the recruitment and selection of students for Vocational Preparation courses comprised a two stage process: potential candidates were contacted by the CES; applicants were then interviewed and selected.

8.3.1 CES CONTACT AND INTERVIEW OF ELIGIBLE CLIENTS

Both in the metropolitan area and in country locations the CES branch closest to the participating college notified a number of eligible young people registered in its area. Information sheets about courses were distributed to other CES branches, where students were drawn on a statewide basis for certain courses. Such young people were directed to, and became the responsibility of the CES branch servicing the college. In practice however, this occurred only rarely, (examples include 'Health Auxiliaries' at Panorama College and 'Basic Farm Skills' at Naracoorte College), and for the most part students were drawn from localities surrounding each college. All young people expressing an interest in a course were invited to attend a group information session conducted by CES personnel, (sometimes with the assistance of college lecturers), during which time the aims and content of a course were outlined. Young people deciding against any further involvement and those considered unsuitable by the CES did not proceed to the next stage. Those remaining were then referred to the college.

8.3.2 INTERVIEW AND FINAL SELECTION

Interviews took place either at the CES office or at the college providing the Vocational Preparation course. In some cases both CES officers and college personnel were involved in interviewing all students and making the final selection. In other cases, these tasks were performed solely by college staff.

In some country locations the steps of screening, interviewing and selection were combined. In these cases the meetings took place at the CES office with CES officers and college lecturers participating.[2]

8·4 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RECRUITING AND SELECTION PROCESS

In practice, the nature of participation by the CES and colleges in seeking applicants and interviewing and selecting students for courses was not uniform throughtout the Vocational Preparation programme. Although it was envisaged that the process of student recruitment would be a joint venture involving staff from both departments, the CES in all localities held the initial responsibility for contacting eligible young people.

In some cases where the CES referrals were too few, college staff independently or in collaboration with the CES attempted to contact other young people. In other cases the college and the CES jointly developed a recruiting strategy. For example, at Murray Bridge the CES notified potential students by letter, while the local radio station advertised the course in and beyond the district served by that CES office.

The colleges, in all cases where the number of candidates exceeded the number of placements in the course, participated in the selection process. In some cases college staff alone conducted the interviews; in others college staff, CES officers and at times the programme co-ordinator formed the panel. The three major factors which appeared to have determined the type of approach adopted by the college were as follows.

8.4.1 COLLEGE INTERPRETATION OF GUIDELINES

Some colleges, particularly those new to transition education, interpreted the guidleines to mean that CES officers would have the sole responsibility for selecting course participants. These colleges tended to play a passive role both in the interviewing of course applicants, and in the final selection of course participants. Some lecturers indicated a willingness to leave most of the screening and selection procedures to the CES because they believed CES personnel were more experienced with the unemployed and therefore in a better position to make an informed judgement about the suitability or otherwise of course aspirants.[3] In other colleges, staff considered that the guidelines allowed them to control the selection process (but not initial location of students) with the CES providing only an advisory service.

8.4.2 COLLEGE RAPPORT WITH THE CES

The degree of rapport between colleges and CES branches varied considerably throughout the programme, and this tended to influence the way in which CES officers and lecturers collaborated in interviewing and selecting students. For example, in many country locations (e.g. Eyre Peninsula and the South East) and small metropolitan colleges (e.g. Port Adelaide College of TAFE) college staff and CES officers had established close and co-operative working relationships. In these cases the college and CES tended to present a common view; conflict of interest or authority was not a problem. This type of co-operation was less evident in the metropolitan area and perhaps can be explained by the more impersonal approach operating in the larger city offices and colleges.

8.4.3 PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF COLLEGES AND SPECIALIST LECTURERS

Some colleges had conducted the same or similar courses beforehand. In some other cases the college had no previous experience with the course but the visiting lecturer who was to teach the course in that college had taught it in a different college. The college's or visiting lecturer's previous experience influenced their approach to the recruitment and selection of students in the following ways. Firstly, considerable importance was placed on the two processes. College staff had developed firm views on which qualities among students were key determinants of their capacity to successfully complete the course. Secondly, the college staff believed that these views would be of greatest benefit to CES staff who were not familiar with the details of the course. Consequently, those colleges and lecturers tended either

- to assume sole responsibility for the final selection of course participants, usually at the college level, or

- to ensure that if CES personnel were involved in the final selection process, their own selection criteria were not overlooked or down-played.

Furthermore, they stressed that where possible the CES (alone or in concert with the college) should endeavour to attract a large enough group of applicants to allow selection criteria to be applied.

8.5 ISSUES IN THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

College staff generally felt that the recruitment and selection processes were among the most contentious issues relating to Vocational Preparation courses. Even so, the target number for each course was generally achieved, although on some occasions not without considerable effort. The following discussion covers some of the most common problems occurring during the recruitment phase.

8.5.1 INSUFFICIENT NUMBERS OF APPLICANTS

Some college lecturers felt that CES personnel were not fully effective in their efforts to promote courses and locate eligible young people. College monthly returns revealed that in many cases fewer than one hundred young people were contacted by the CES. Given the usually small response rate from those contacted, and the even smaller number attending interviews, it was often difficult for college lecturers to implement adequate selection procedures. In some localities, fewer than fifteen applicants were interviewed, and all persons expressing an interest in the course were enrolled.[4] Lecturers in these circumstances were disappointed that they had been unable to adopt a more rigorous selection policy. Sometimes courses were topped up with recent school leavers, or by openly advertising for young people. This latter action usually resulted in a long and tedious search to fill a course.[5]

College staff generally acknowledged the difficulty of the recruitment task despite the considerable efforts by CES staff and believed that the college as the educational institution providing the courses should have a more influential role in the recruitment process. They sought greater assurance that the widest group practicable was being contacted and, that suitable candidates were not being screened out by the CES. Where college staff found the CES role acceptable and effective, potential problems had been avoided by direct involvement of TAFE staff with the CES staff in the recruitment process.

A joint approach based on the main strategies used in 1980 (open advertisement) and 1981 (CES referrals) was negotiated for 1982. CES referrals should concentrate on the youth 'most at risk', while the advertising responses should reach a wider audience of youth not necessarily confined to the district served by the CES office handling the referral operation. It was anticipated that a larger pool would therefore be tapped.

8.5.2 STUDENTS' FEARS ABOUT THEIR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT

Several lecturers had misgivings about the CES practice of interviewing potential students prior to their referral to the college. The staff believed that many young people contacted by the CES attended the interview not because they were interested in the course but because they feared that their unemployment benefit might be withdrawn should they fail to attend an interview.

Some lecturers conducted group information sessions at the CES offices. Potential students were told in these preliminary meetings that Vocational Preparation courses were not compulsory and that being screened out would not lead to loss of unemployment benefits. They also were given information about the aims and structure of the course. Most of those attending the preliminary meetings indicated that they were not really interested in the course. Such people would probably have been 'early dropouts' if they had

enrolled in the course. The meetings were considered to have been valuable in avoiding later attrition.

8.5.3 THE REFERRAL OF INAPPROPRIATE YOUNG PEOPLE

College personnel considered that the recruitment procedures and selection criteria applied by the CES did not always result in the enrolment of the right type of students for the course. In particular it was felt that the CES often referred young people without due regard being given to age, ability, background or interest in the course and its occupational field. This criticism was voiced most strongly by lecturers seeking sub-groups of the broad 15-19 unemployed target group, in particular sub-groups comprising older educationally successful and motivated young people. These lecturers found that such a preference often conflicted with the view expressed by the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs (especially the CES) that those young people experiencing most difficulty in entering the workforce - the long term unemployed (over 8 months) - should be given preference in transition education programmes. Many lecturers preferred young people 'most likely to succeed' and often were reluctant to accept the long term unemployed whom they considered were

- unable to assimilate readily into an intensive full-time course,
- deficient in basic literacy and numeracy skills, and
- lacking in confidence due to prolonged unemployment.[6]

Many lecturers were also reluctant to accept the younger unemployed (15-16 years) into courses on the grounds that they were often

- too experienced or immature to successfully adjust to a short but intensive Vocational Preparation course, and
- unlikely, because of their age, to be able to find relevant employment after the course.

For example, lecturers involved with 'Health Auxiliaries' courses considered that the major employing agency, the private nursing homes, preferred young adults rather than younger teenagers as adults were better able to adjust to the working environment of a nursing home for the aged.

Staff in some colleges felt that the CES often perceived Vocational Preparation courses as a convenient means of shedding those unemployed young people for whom it had found difficulty in placing in employment. Instances where CES officers insisted on the inclusion of unsuitable students screened out by lecturers were not appreciated by colleges. They contended that other courses such as Foundation or EPUY (Education Programmes For Unemployed Youth), would be suitable for these young people.

It should be pointed out that not all colleges had misgivings about including the younger or long-term unemployed into Vocational Preparation courses. For example, staff at Croydon Park College of TAFE willingly sought and accepted a high proportion of these clients in their Customer Contact courses. They understood that these young people were numerous in the locality surrounding the College and were most in need of the course. This view accorded fully with the position of the CES.

8·6 SUITABILITY OF STUDENTS

Questions related to the suitability of students enrolled in the courses raise one of the most contentious issues in the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme.

Should the selection process ensure that the students enrolled are the most likely to succeed in a given course? Or should the course be designed for and offered to those people identified as most at risk?

TAFE staff generally favoured the first alternative. On the other hand, the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, both through the South Australian School-to-Work Transition Programme State Steering Committee and the CES, favoured the second option.

As stated in Chapter 3, Vocational Preparation courses were designed in the middle ground between Foundation courses and Pre-Vocational courses, and they were pitched at the middle range of educational ability of the pool of unemployed youth.

If such courses are considered to have priority for funding, they should be funded on the basis of seeking to attract the most suitable students for the courses - the most likely to succeed students. However, if it is considered more important to attract the most at risk students, then funds should be re-deployed to courses which are more appropriate to the needs of that student group. Clearly, once the fundamental policy decision has been made, it is essential that all field operatives involved have a clear understanding of the implications of the decision.

8·7 THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF SMALL COUNTRY COLLEGES

While the broad issue of recruitment in larger city colleges can be tackled from at least two differing viewpoints (discussed above), the options available to smaller, country colleges are narrower. These colleges serve geographically wider but less populous communities than colleges in the metropolitan area or provincial centres. Thus the smaller colleges draw

students

- from a potentially wider area - with daily transport (or board) a major problem for them or even a deterrent to their participation.

- from a smaller target group - where students are drawn from outside this group in order to build up the class numbers, the student group becomes more diverse in age, ability and so on.

Another problem stems from the narrow range of industries in some country localities. That narrow base limits the range of occupational prospects for the client group unless a course is offered with vocational opportunities outside the district in mind. Furthermore, it is possible that many in the client group have had some experience of the industries in the local community because of factors such as (a) the narrow industrial base (b) the small size of the community (c) the seasonal nature of much rural work and (d) the length of time the individual has spent in that community. This experience is likely to diminish the pool of unemployed young people interested in a course designed around local industry.

Recruitment therefore presents special problems for the small country college. The following suggestions are made in the light of earlier findings.

- special consideration for the travel costs of day students and the boarding requirements for more remote students,

- financial assistance for students leaving their local community to attend courses offered in metropolitan or larger regional colleges,

- drawing students from outside both the local CES district and the college's usual catchment area,

- encouraging clients to take up courses relevant to occupations available outside the local community requiring the local course's graduates to seek work away from the home district.

CHAPTER 9

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

9·1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the characteristics of students. Included are comments on their backgrounds and attitudes. The data is derived from questionnaires completed by students at the beginning of courses, and from discussions with students and lecturers during the field-work stage of the study. Data relating to enrolments and sex were also obtained from college returns submitted to the Transition Education Unit.

In the questionnaire students were asked to supply information about their personal background, educational background and career interests, including employment experience. They were also asked to give reasons for enrolling in a Vocational Preparation course. (See Appendix C). The findings presented in this chapter are based on the return of 312 questionnaires from 20 Vocational Preparation courses, representing, 69% of all courses and 72% of all students participating in the programme.* The same questionnaire was completed by students enrolled in other Transition Education programmes, and therefore allows for comparative statements to be made.

9·2 STUDENTS' BACKGROUND

9.2.1 SEX OF STUDENTS IN COURSES

Of the 435 students participating in the Vocational Preparation programme, 75% were females and 25% were males. Young women were in the majority in all courses except the following:

- two Varied Trades courses (Eyre Peninsula and Murraylands Community Colleges of TAFE)
- Fish Processing (Eyre Peninsula Community College of TAFE)
- Fibreglass Boat Building (Port Adelaide College of TAFE)
- Horticulture (Kensington Park College of TAFE)(Yarrabee Annexe).

The predominance of young women was consistent with a central aim of the programme, namely to give emphasis to opportunities for unemployed females.

---

* 29 Vocational Preparation courses were provided by 18 colleges in 1981, catering for 435 students.

This move balanced the excess of males in one other part of the transition education programme - Pre-Vocational courses. Comparative statistics are given below for four transition education programmes.

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGES OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS IN 1981 TRANSITION EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

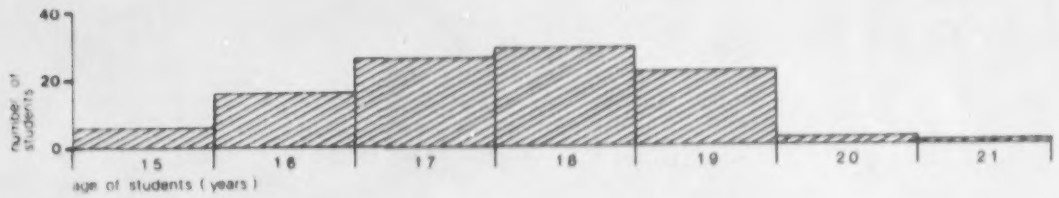
SEX	PERCENTAGE ENROLMENTS FOR FOUR TRANSITION EDUCATION PROGRAMMES			
	VOC. PREP.	EPUY	FOUNDATION	PRE-VOC. (Trade)
MALE	25	48	29	96
FEMALE	75	52	71	4

9.2.2 AGE OF STUDENTS

Students enrolled in Vocational Preparation courses generally fell within the age bracket specified for the programme (15-19 years). 79% of all students surveyed were aged between 17 and 19 years. Their ages on enrolment are shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY AGE IN THE 1981 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME



9.2.3 FAMILY BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS

Data on the family backgrounds of students enrolled in Vocational Preparation courses provided the following findings.

- 80% of respondents were living with their parents at the time they attended the course and 75% were living with both parents.
- 85% of respondents were born in Australia. 61% of respondents' fathers and 68% of respondents' mothers were born in Australia.
- Over 40% of respondents' parents had achieved some secondary education.
- 66% of respondents' fathers and 68% of respondents' mothers employed were engaged on a full-time basis. Respondents' fathers were well represented in the following occupational areas: transport and communications; fishing and farming; production process and labouring;

administrative and management. A high proportion of respondents' mothers were housewives (45%). The next highest occupational category was 'professional/technical' (4.6%), followed by 'clerical' (4.1%) and 'sales' (3.6%). The findings are summarized in table 6.

TABLE 6

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF VOCATIONAL PREPARATION STUDENTS' PARENTS

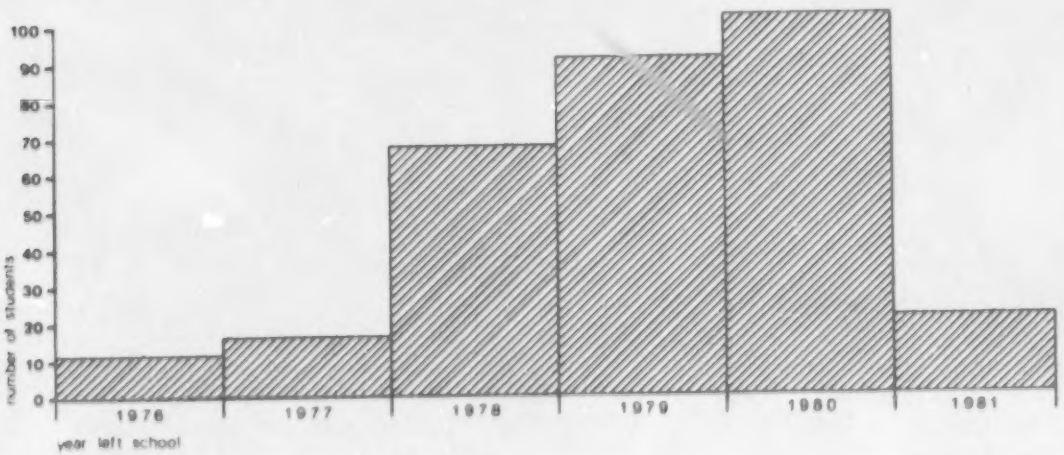
OCCUPATION	FATHER	MOTHER
	%	%
PROFESSIONAL TECHNICAL	4·1	4·6
ADMINISTRATIVE / MANAGERIAL	9·7	1·5
CLERICAL	2·6	4·1
SALES	3·1	3·6
FISHERMAN , FARMER	11·2	1·0
TRANSPORT , COMMUNICATION	12·2	2·0
TRADESMAN	8·2	-
PRODUCTION WORKER AND LABOURER	12·2	3·1
SERVICE WORKER	3·6	10·7
PENSIONER	8·7	10·7
UNEMPLOYED	5·6	2·6
DECEASED	4·6	0·5
RETIRED	2·6	1·0
NOT STATED	7·1	6·6
HOUSEWIFE	-	44·9
INADEQUATELY DESCRIBED	4·6	3·0

9.2.4 YEARS IN WHICH STUDENTS LEFT SCHOOL

The years in which students left school are shown in figure 2. 60% of students had left school at least a year prior to their courses.

FIGURE 2

YEAR IN WHICH STUDENTS LEFT SCHOOL

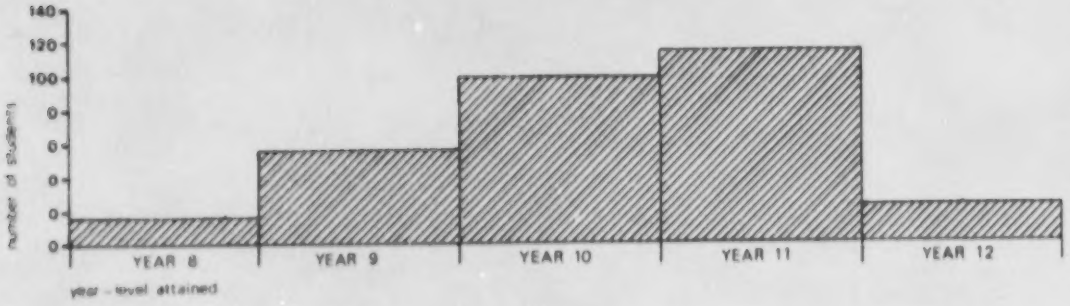


9.2.5 LEVELS OF SCHOOLING PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED BY STUDENTS

The year levels completed by students are shown in figure 3. While the

FIGURE 3

YEAR-LEVEL OF SCHOOLING PREVIOUSLY ATTAINED BY VOCATIONAL PREPARATION STUDENTS



year levels ranged from year 8 to year 12 inclusive, it is notable that over half of the students had not completed year 11. Over the entire Vocational Preparation programme students typically had no more than average levels of secondary education. This figure counters possible criticisms that lecturers, in seeking students 'most likely to succeed', obtained a disproportionately high number of better educated students from the ranks of unemployed youth. If educational level is taken as one indicator of students at-risk status, then these data appear consistent with the aims expressed by the CES, namely for courses to serve principally the more at-risk young people.

9.2.6 UNEMPLOYMENT HISTORY

The lengths of unemployment and the intervals between previous job and the course are shown in table 7. The data show that the students typically had been unemployed for much of their post school life. For example, almost three-quarters of students had not been employed for at least four months before the course. Over a quarter had not been employed in the previous twelve months. It can be claimed that the programme reached youth who, in terms of the unemployment criteria applied by the Commonwealth (particularly through the CES), could be considered 'at risk'.

9.2.7 EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Seventy four percent (231) of the students surveyed indicated that they had obtained employment of some kind since leaving secondary school and before commencing their Vocational Preparation course. Of those, 32% had held one job; 31% had held two jobs; and 37% had held three or more jobs. As shown in table 8 relative to the total number of jobs held by all respondents;

TABLE 7 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION STUDENTS TOTAL MONTHS UNEMPLOYED

MONTHS	TOTAL MONTHS UNEMPLOYED SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL		PERIOD SINCE 1982 EMPLOYED	
	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	%	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	%
1 - 3	16	6	61	26
4 - 6	53	18	72	31
7 - 9	51	18	39	16
10 - 12	59	21	32	14
13 - 18	44	15	13	5
19 - 24	36	13	9	4
25 - 36	27	9	8	4
TOTAL	286	100	234	100

TABLE 8 TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS HELD BY STUDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO INDUSTRY TYPE

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	STUDENTS' JOBS	
	NUMBER	%
CLERICAL	30	8
SALES	110	28
FARMING AND FISHING	60	15
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION	14	4
TRADES	8	2
PRODUCTION AND PROCESS WORK	59	15
LABOURING	25	6
SERVICE , SPORT AND RECREATION	76	19
INADEQUATELY DESCRIBED	8	3
TOTAL	390	100

- 28% of jobs held were in sales employment (notably in such jobs as working in supermarkets as food packers and checkout operators);
- 15% of jobs held were in process and production employment; and
- 19% of jobs held were in service industries particularly in the area of sport and recreation employment.

Forty eight percent of these jobs were full-time; the remainder were part-time or casual positions. The duration of each job ranged from one month to thirty eight months; however, the majority (60%) lasted less than five months.

By cross-tabulating the types of jobs held by respondents with types of Vocational Preparation courses selected, it was found that 32% of jobs

previously taken were directly related to course choice. The strongest association occurred between student employment experience in sales work and courses undertaken in the same occupation area. To some extent this was not unexpected given that twelve Vocational Preparation courses were offered in the retail (and related) industry. Retail courses accounted for 41% of the total programme, and 37% (163) of all student enrolments were in this vocational area.

9·3 REASONS MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO ENROL IN VOCATIONAL PREPARATION COURSES

From the questionnaire items seeking students' reasons for enrolling in courses and from discussions with course lecturers and Vocational Preparation students, the following findings were obtained. Respondents were allowed to state one or more preferences.

9.3.1 REASONS MOTIVATING STUDENTS ANALYSED INTO 'VERY IMPORTANT' OR 'FAIRLY IMPORTANT' CATEGORIES

It was found that 93% of all respondents regarded 'to get training for a job' as the reason for enrolling in Vocational Preparation courses. Over 80% also indicated the desire to 'study in a field that really interests me' was also an important factor. Sixty four percent of respondents believed their course would help them to 'determine what career to follow'.

9.3.2 REASONS MOTIVATING STUDENTS ANALYSED INTO 'LITTLE' OR 'NO IMPORTANCE' CATEGORIES

Over 70% of all respondents indicated that none of the following reasons were important in motivating them to enrol in Vocational Preparation courses:

- 'To be with friends doing the course',
- 'Because an apprenticeship was not available',
- 'Because other preferred courses were full',
- 'To qualify for extra social service allowance'.

Fifty six percent also responded that they had not enrolled in courses 'to please parents'.

Discussions with students confirmed that the desire to improve their chances of getting a job was the major reason motivating students to enrol in Vocational Preparation courses. However, students varied in their commitment to a broad industry or to a specific set of occupations. In general, students tended to fall into two broad groups: (a) those already

working (or having worked) casually or intermittently in a given industry and desiring occupational training in order to gain a secure or more substantial position, and (b) those largely lacking in employment experience but nevertheless clear in their preference for certain occupations.

Students in the first group often expressed concern that they lacked sufficient job skills or experience to gain an occupation of their choice and a belief that the occupational training they would gain during a course would improve their job prospects, particularly in competition with other young people seeking similar employment. For example, many young women seeking jobs as assistants in private nursing homes felt that completing a 'Health Auxiliaries' course would impress prospective employers. For these students the course represented an opportunity to consolidate and refine further their established orientation towards a chosen industry.

Students in the second group, particularly those lacking in previous employment experience, tended to enter courses with a general interest in an industry or set of occupations. For these students enrolling in a course was seen as an opportunity to gain skills and a practical appreciation of the work tasks and conditions of employment in an industry of interest. (Notable examples were students who enrolled in the Fibreglass Boat Building course).* These students therefore enrolled in Vocational Preparation courses in order to confirm a provisional or speculative orientation towards a certain industry or set of occupations.

Discussions both with course lecturers and students revealed that getting a job was not the only motive which led students to enrol in courses. These additional concerns related broadly to students perceiving course attendance as a possible personal development and social learning exercise. Many students, for example, commented that they were 'sick of being unemployed' and wanted to 'do something useful'. Others hoped that the course would help them to 'get along better with people' and allow them to form friendships with other young people with similar interests and problems. For some students the decision to enrol in a course was influenced by the challenge of attending a TAFE college. The course was seen as an opportunity to engage in 'higher education'. Notably, many students believed that although the course would help their job prospects, nevertheless the chances of obtaining work would not be great.

These student views reflected an important aspect of the attraction of Vocational Preparation courses for many students: the course was seen by students as a means of re-introducing some challenge and direction into daily life as well as helping to alleviate feelings of social isolation and lack of purpose often accompanying unemployment. In sum, getting a job was the ultimate objective for most students but their experience of unemployment, taken with their sober predictions of their job opportunities, set other objectives.

---

* See chapter 6 Fibreglass Boat Building; (case study)

9.4 STUDENTS' PERSONAL PROBLEMS

Another aspect of the characteristics of Vocational Preparation students highlighted in discussions with lecturers and students was the prevalence of student social, personal and economic problems. This can be largely attributed to the nature of the client group: young unemployed people are generally regarded as more likely to suffer from such problems than others in their age group.

Vocational Preparation courses varied in the incidence of students with personal difficulties. Some courses were clearly more affected by such students. This was often influenced by the location of individual courses. Courses such as Basic Farm Skills (Naracoorte College of TAFE), and Customer Contact (Croydon Park College of TAFE), were characterised by a high proportion of such students, a consequence of the nature of the pool of unemployed youth in the localities served by both colleges. However, students with personal problems and difficulties were observed in virtually every course funded under the programme. Specific student problems included the following:

- financial difficulties, usually brought about by prolonged unemployment, and often exacerbated by delays in transition education allowance payments,
- unsatisfactory or unsettled living arrangements, often making regular course attendance difficult,
- inadequacies in students' personal and social skills, often undermining their ability to adapt successfully to constraints of a full-time vocational course, and
- personal and emotional problems (varying from one individual to another) related to family life and personal relationships.

These characteristics of the client group are important in two respects. Firstly, students' personal problems brought additional responsibilities to Vocational Preparation lecturers, not usually experienced by other lecturers in TAFE (see chapter 4, 4.8.2); and secondly, because students experiencing difficulty faced complications both in attending courses regularly and in dedicating their full attention to activities within the courses.

CHAPTER 10
OUTCOMES

10·1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes outcomes of the Vocational Preparation programme (and its courses) and discusses them in terms of objectives set for it. It is divided into two main sections. The first deals with the objectives relating to the individual student. The second addresses the wider aims of the Vocational Preparation programme.

10·2 OUTCOMES FOR THE STUDENT

The aims of the programme were outlined in Chapter One and were discussed further in Chapter Three. They comprised in part the aims shared by courses within the Department's Transition Education programme in general and by the guidelines which the Commonwealth set for projects funded under its "School-to-Work" programme. The aims also included some statements applying specially to the Vocational Preparation courses. From these aims, whether stated by personnel or students before or during the courses, the following major objectives were identified:

- improvement of students' employability,
- acquisition of knowledge about the conditions (and pre-requisites) of employment in certain industries and occupations,
- confirmation, refinement or modification of students' prior orientation towards certain occupations, coupled with the development of realistic expectations and aspirations,
- development of occupational skills relevant to several occupations within one industry or, alternatively, across related industries,
- development of personal qualities and skills for seeking and retaining employment.

Those objectives were widely accepted as the purposes of the programme in terms of the benefits to individual students. Objectives attributed less widely to the programme were:

- acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes helping students to cope with possibly protracted bouts of unemployment, underemployment or intermittent employment, and
- acquisition of a basic general education.

The first of the above two objectives was cited by several lecturers and college administrators who, in relating the rigours of the job market to many students' "poor skills, lack of experience and low esteem", believed that the ideal of secure full-time employment lay beyond the immediate grasp of some students.[1] The second of the objectives emerged as a response in the students' enrolment questionnaires. For example, 71% of 312 students surveyed stated that "to get a basic general education" was a fairly or very important reason for their enrolling in the programme.

10.2.1 EMPLOYABILITY

'Improving employability' was regarded by almost all students and personnel associated with the programme as the primary aim of the courses. However, two main interpretations were given for the criterion of improved employability, one by the students, the other by lecturers. Students saw their acquisition of a job 'as soon as possible' after or even during the course as the ideal outcome. Longer 'waits' were not welcomed but, if a job eventually could be obtained, were seen as tolerably acceptable because the ultimate purpose had been achieved. Students realized that their job prospects could be improved but not guaranteed by their participation in the course. Some college staff developed strong personal as well as professional commitments to helping their students and considered that '100% employment equals 100% success."[2] The bulk of TAFE staff felt that a lower rate (say 50%) could be regarded as a successful result.

In general, lecturers interviewed in the study took pains to instill in the students the understanding that the course would not guarantee a job for them.[3] Some of these lecturers held that a proportion of students was unlikely to obtain work in the short term because of the rigours of the labour market and the qualities of some students. Reflecting the Commonwealth's view as enunciated by senior officers in the South Australian division of the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, these personnel stated that '100% employment' of students was not a realistic objective. Instead, they argued, the programme could be regarded as a success (in terms of the 'employability' aim) if the overall employment rate of the students after the courses was significantly greater than the rate before the courses.[4] In another variant of this view it was argued that the courses would be seen as successful if the employment rate of the students was raised to that of other age-groups. That is, the objective was 'to make the 15 to 19 year olds at least equally competitive in the job stakes with the rest of the population.'

Data on the employment rates across all courses were not obtained for reasons discussed in Chapter Two. However, the phone survey of a sample of 120 out of the programme's 435 students provided data on the employment rates as at November, 1981. The period between the course and the survey varied from one to seven months with over half of the courses concluding within three months of the survey. The employment rates are shown in table 9. About half of the students were employed in November, 1981. The employment rate for this sample is similar to the rate (53.6%) reported by Harrison (1981, p.26)[5] for students from those 1980 Pre-Vocational courses from which the 1981 Vocational Preparation courses were derived.

TABLE 9

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT RATES VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME NOVEMBER 1981

SEX	EMPLOYED	NOT EMPLOYED	TOTAL
MALE	15 (50 %) [a]	15 (50 %)	30
FEMALE	39 (43 %)	51 (57 %)	90
TOTAL	54 (45 %)	66 (55 %)	120

[a] Percentage of row total for males, females or all students.

The employment rate was not monitored after November, 1981. However, there are grounds for postulating that the rate increased. Harrison (1981) reported employment rates for students from the Department's 1980 transition education courses. Of those students employed at the time of his survey (about six months after the courses) some nineteen percent did not gain their employment until three months or more since completing the course. Data for two courses from the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme was obtained in June 1982 while this report was being finalised. At that time twenty-two students representing 80% of the students from the Health Auxiliaries course conducted by Panorama Community College (TAFE) were employed. A similarly high employment rate (80%) was reported for the Health Auxiliaries course conducted at Yorke Peninsula College of TAFE.[6] This suggests that the employment rate tends to increase over time, at least over the period of a few months.

The employment figures for the eleven different types of Vocational Preparation courses are shown in table 10. Although the samples were too small to allow confident generalisation of those figures, the following conclusions appear justifiable.

- In all course types at least some students gained employment. None of these courses was a total dead-end in terms of employment prospects.[7]

- The Customer Contact courses had a low employment rate (35.3%) compared to the mean for the sample (45%). It is reasonable to attribute part to the particular characteristics of students in Customer Contact courses.

  (i) 21% of students were aged 15 (compared to the programme's average of 4% for the lowest age bracket),

  (ii) all but one student had been unemployed for a period of ten months or more prior to the course (whereas over the whole programme less than 60% had been unemployed for that length of time).

Thirty (56%) of the students employed gained full-time employment and the remainder (24) were employed part-time. The types of industries in which the students were employed are shown in table 11. The most common industries employing the students were 'retail' and 'production/process'. This

pattern appears reasonable given that 'retail' and 'production' type courses were emphasized.

10.2.2 VOCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

To a varying extent each course provided students with information and direct experience of the conditions associated with several occupations. That this major aim was addressed in the courses was confirmed through interviews with lecturers and through students' responses in a questionnaire (see table 12). Its importance in the eyes of employers was noted in the case-studies of the Dental Studies and Fibreglass Boat Building courses. However, table 12 shows that a significant minority (18% of respondents) were 'unsure' as to whether they had developed an understanding of a job. This suggests that the outcome in relation to this particular objective requires attention. Against this criticism it is noted that those courses containing the 'most disadvantaged' students were subject to different curricular emphases. For example, some lecturers stated that once they had recognised the severity of their students' financial, social and general educational problems, they increased the 'personal development' aspect of their courses, thereby lessening emphasis of occupation-specific tuition.[6] In this case students would be expected to improve personal development performance, but might show less progress in regard to comprehension of the job area for which the course is designed.

10.2.3 VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION

From each of the 18 courses whose students were interviewed the overwhelming majority agreed that the course had helped them to develop or alter their orientations towards particular vocations. As pointed out in Chapter 8, many students possessed an orientation towards the occupations addressed by the course. The majority of students considered that these vocational orientations had been confirmed and usually refined because of the course. The remainder stated that they had come to the view that their previous occupational preferences were not feasible or desirable. In other words, the courses had given the students an opportunity to discover what those jobs are really like without actually gaining employment in those jobs.

For example, some students on completing Health Auxiliaries courses still desired employment in community care, but found that the central occupation of the course (assistant in private nursing homes) no longer appealed to them. For some of these students who developed strong orientations towards certain occupations, the course helped them to set objectives in their pursuit of their preferred vocation. Examples were provided in Chapter 4, specifically in the discussion of the Dental Studies course.

10.2.4 OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

The curriculum documents for the courses in the programme show that the courses were to include skill-training relevant to several occupations.

TABLE 10

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT RATES INDIVIDUAL AND GROUPS OF COURSES NOVEMBER 1981

VOCATIONAL PREPARATION COURSES	STUDENTS ENROLLED	STUDENTS CONTACTED (N)	NUMBER OF STUDENTS EMPLOYED			NUMBER OF STUDENTS UNEMPLOYED
			FULL - TIME	PART - TIME	FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME	
RETAIL SALES * (3)	48	21	4	7	11	10
SMALL BUSINESS PRACTICE * (2)	15	5	2	-	2	3
FOOD / BAR SERVICE * (2)	41	16	3	4	7	9
CUSTOMER CONTACT * (3)	44	23	5	1	6	17
VARIED TRADES * (2)	30	18	6	3	9	9
BASIC FARM SKILLS * (2)	8	4	1	1	2	2
HORTICULTURE * (2)	18	9	3	2	5	4
HEALTH AUXILIARIES * (2)	18	9	1	2	3	6
DENTAL STUDIES * (1)	15	9	4	2	6	3
FASHION INDUSTRIES * (2)	12	6	1	2	3	3
TOTAL	246	120	30	24	54	66

* (N) Represents number of courses providing data.

TABLE 11

STUDENTS EMPLOYED BY TYPE OF INDUSTRY

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	STUDENTS EMPLOYED	
	NUMBER	(%)
RETAIL	16	30
PRODUCTION / PROCESS	15	28
FOOD / CATERING	9	17
COMMUNITY SERVICE (HEALTH)	8	15
CLERICAL	3	5
OTHER	3	5
TOTAL	54	100

TABLE 12

STUDENT PERCEPTION OF LEVEL OF SKILL ATTAINED AND LEVEL OF JOB UNDERSTANDING REACHED AT THE END OF VOCATIONAL PREPARATION COURSES

SKILLS AND JOB UNDERSTANDING ATTAINED AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO ANSWER
WORKING SKILLS TO ENTER A PARTICULAR JOB	78 (88%)	3 (3%)	5 (6%)	3 (3%)
UNDERSTANDING OF A JOB	65 (73%)	6 (7%)	16 (18%)	2 (2%)

NOTE: Data covered 8 courses and 89 respondents.

Interviews with students and lecturers confirmed that the intention was generally carried out (see also table 12). In some cases students considered that they had not "had enough practical experience". This suggests that more 'hands on' experience should be included in these courses in order to make them sufficiently experiential.

How widely the skills provided in the course could be transferred across occupations was not ascertained. As the case study on the Fibreglass Boat Building course shows, the issue is open to differing interpretations. In this light it is worth noting that in interviews several students volunteered statements that they would have preferred 'training in only one or two types of jobs' Thus there may be some grounds - if students' views are to be taken into account - for tempering the 'broad-based training' objective of the programme's courses: training confined to one or only a few types of occupations would appear to suit some students.

10.2.5 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

In a survey of 89 students from the first semester's courses, over 80% claimed that they had gained self-awareness and self-confidence through the course. A further 79% claimed to have gained 'understanding of others.' These data were supported by students' comments in interviews. For example:

- "I can talk to people better."
- "I've got more confidence."

Students also mentioned specific job-seeking skills. For example, "I can handle interviews better", ".... write applications" and "... find it easier to approach employers", were common types of comments.

One clear indication of the programme's success in this field came from the following observation of lecturers (supported by students' comments): students who had not formerly chased work started to go beyond the CES and newspaper advertisements in the pursuit of employment. They actively sought out employers irrespective of any publicised job vacancies and registered themselves with those employers. Their self-starting attitudes apparently impressed several employers who provided them with jobs.(9)

Although the majority of students regarded favourably the personal development and general career education aspects of the curriculum the longer term reactions may be less favourable. For example, seven students (from the 120 in the phone survey) volunteered the comments that in the absence of employment since the course they were "starting to feel let down". Although the proportion who shared that view was small, the response indicates that course graduates who remain unemployed might lose positive attitudes gained during the tution period. Some lecturers recognised this

possibility and (as a personal rather than official undertaking) maintained contact with their students after the course's completion. These actions reflected yet again the high personal commitment and the extra workload over 'normal' teaching duties of teaching staff.[10] This commitment could be regarded as a major contribution to the long term personal development of students.

10.2.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS REGARDING OUTCOMES

In general the programme can be regarded as successful in terms of benefits to students. In addition to the previously discussed findings the following responses from 89 students surveyed after the first semester's courses are notable:

- 98% found their course 'extremely interesting', 'very interesting' or 'fairly interesting'.
- 91% were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their courses.

Similar views were expressed by other students interviewed during or immediately after their courses. Contrary views were infrequent and on those occasions where negative comment occurred, were confined largely to a few courses.[11]

In the follow-up phone survey more negative comments were made about the courses with the highest concentration of negative response coming from the unemployed group. The possible deterioration of the motivation and attitudes developed by a course, if students remain unemployed for a protracted period after the course, is a question of social and perhaps educational significance. Further, whether the employment rate of 45% is to be regarded as a highly or partially successful outcome remains a question open to differing opinion.

10·3 BROADER OUTCOMES

The broader objectives of the programme were discussed in Chapter Three and related to:

- opportunities for young women,
- opportunities for youth in country settings,
- extension of the range of full-time transition education courses to smaller colleges,
- labour requirements in industry, particularly for occupations not addressed by other programmes.

10.3.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

The Vocational Preparation programme provided courses serving more young women (326) than males (109). Of the full-time courses in the 1981 Transition Education Programme the ratio of females to males was the greatest for Vocational Preparation courses. The programme attained its objective of attending especially to the needs of young women.

Most Vocational Preparation courses generally focused on occupations that were not traditionally male. This trend was seen by some observers as reinforcement of stereo-types of female vocational orientations. This trend, it was argued, would not result in young women obtaining work after the courses because of poor employment prospects in those traditional occupations. The similar employment rates of males and females offer little support to that view. Of the students surveyed in November 1981

- 15 of 30 males obtained work (50%), and
- 39 of 90 females obtained work (43%).

10.3.2 OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COUNTRY

Fourteen of the 29 courses funded in the programme were provided in country settings. Of the 435 students enrolled in the programme, 199 (46%) attended the courses in the country (see table 13).

Given the concentration of the state's population in the metropolitan area of Adelaide, arguably the programme fulfilled its objective of providing full-time transition education courses in country settings. Since with few exceptions enrolments in the courses were drawn from the district surrounding the college which staged the course, the programme served the needs particularly of unemployed youth in the country.

The employment rates of students from metropolitan and country courses were similar. Of students surveyed from country courses twenty-six (46%) were employed. Of sixty-four students from metropolitan courses surveyed twenty-eight (44%) were employed. The ratios of full-time to part-time jobs obtained by students from the two groups surveyed also were similar (see table 14).

10.3.3 THE SMALL COLLEGE

The programme was intended to enable full-time transition education courses to be conducted by smaller colleges. Of the 29 courses in the programme 17 were conducted in small metropolitan and country colleges, while 12 courses were conducted in the larger colleges of the metropolitan area, the Iron Triangle and the South East. In this regard the programme generally

TABLE 13

METROPOLITAN AND COUNTRY COLLEGE COURSES FUNDED UNDER THE VOCATIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME IN 1981, INCLUDING STUDENT ENROLMENTS

COUNTRY COLLEGES					METROPOLITAN COLLEGES				
COLLEGE	COURSES	STUDENTS			COLLEGE	COURSES	STUDENTS		
		male	female	total			male	female	total
EYRE PENINSULA	Varied Trades	14	1	15	CROYDON	Customer Contact 3	2	43	45
"	Small Business Practice	-	15	15	ADELAIDE	Customer Contact	1	12	13
	Fish Processing	15	-	15	GILLES PLAINS	Dental Studies 3	-	26	26
GAWLER	Food and Bar	1	14	15	"	Fashion Industry	-	12	12
"	Retail Sales	3	12	15	PORT ADELAIDE	Health Auxiliaries	-	18	18
RIVERLAND	Food and Bar	3	12	15	"	Retail Sales	3	15	18
PORT PIRIE	Food and Bar	-	15	15	"	Fibreglass Boat Building	15	-	15
SOUTH EAST	Food and Bar	3	8	11	O'HALLORAN HILL	Retail Sales	-	15	15
"	Retail Sales	3	12	15	KENSINGTON PARK	Retail Sales	-	15	15
NARACOORTE	Basic Farm Skills	4	4	8	PANORAMA	Health Auxiliaries	2	27	29
KADINA	Basic Farm Skills	15	-	15	YARRABEE	Horticulture	10	5	15
"	Health Auxiliaries	-	15	15	SALISBURY	Retail Sales	-	15	15
MURRAY BRIDGE	Varied Trades	15	-	15					
	Retail Sales	-	15	15					
8	14	76 (38%)	123 (62%)	199 (46%)	9	15	33 (14%)	203 (86%)	236 (54%)

TABLE 14

NUMBER OF STUDENTS EMPLOYED FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME

AREA	STUDENTS EMPLOYED		
	FULL - TIME	PART TIME	TOTAL
COUNTRY	13 (50%) *	13 (50%) *	26
METROPOLITAN	16 (57%) **	12 (43%) **	28
TOTAL	29	25	54

* percentage of total for country students.
** percentage of total for metropolitan students.

attained the objective, at least in terms of the extent of emphasis between small and large colleges.

10.3.4 LABOUR REQUIREMENTS

The study did not include a systematic investigation of the programme's relationships with industry and its manpower requirements. Nevertheless qualitative data bearing on the general issue were obtained. The project officer who co-ordinated the programme conducted numerous pilot investigations in 1981 (and in previous years) in which she sought out small industries with the training and labour characteristics described in Chapter Three. Some of these enquiries proved unsuccessful, either because the originally speculated prospects on investigation were found wanting or

because of resistance by some industries or employee groups to training courses. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator and personnel in some colleges who initiated courses, succeeded in finding certain industries with tangible prospects. The Dental Studies and Fibreglass Boat Building courses are typical examples.

While Departmental personnel, often in concert with officers from the CES or representatives of industry, established the feasibility of courses in certain industries, the fact remains that no formal mechanisms of investigation were used. Some personnel suggested that more systematic investigation would have been most beneficial and that research could be conducted to isolate relevant client groups.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

The following staff members of the Department of Technical and Further Education were interviewed during the field work of the Vocational Preparation Evaluation Project.

Bob Jackson:	(Formerly) Head of the Transition Education Unit (D.TAFE)
Judith Haigh:	Project Officer (Vocational Preparation Programme) Transition Education Unit
Dr. Ian Whyte:	Lecturer, Regency Park Community College
John Marsh:	Lecturer (formerly) Naracoorte College of Technical and Further Education
Leon Gray:	Lecturer, (formerly) Pt. Adelaide Community College (TAFE)
Jeremy Goodburn:	Acting Head of School (Hairdressing), Croydon Park College of Technical and Further Education
Shirley Wilson:	Lecturer, School of Hairdressing, Croydon Park College of Technical and Further Education
Steven Kelton:	Principal, Eyre Peninsula Community College (TAFE)
Layton Gale:	Lecturer (temporary) Eyre Peninsula Community College (TAFE)
Brian Lawler:	Lecturer (temporary) Eyre Peninsula Community College (TAFE)
Ian Saunders:	Principal, Gawler College of Technical and Further Education
Josie Ryng:	Lecturer (temporary) Gilles Plains Community College (TAFE)
John Chandler:	Principal, Naracoorte College of Technical and Further Education
Jack McGorm:	Deputy Principal, Naracoorte College of Technical and Further Education
Leon Holme:	Principal, Port Adelaide Community College (TAFE)
Wayne Coombe:	Lecturer, Port Adelaide Community College (TAFE)
Sue Winwood:	Lecturer, Panorama Community College (TAFE)
Peter Kinnear:	Transition Education Co-ordinator, South East Community College (TAFE)

John Squires:	Lecturer (temporary) South East Community College (TAFE)
Sharon Wiles:	Lecturer (temporary) South East Community College (TAFE)
Martin Winter:	Lecturer (temporary) South East Community College (TAFE)
Gwen Butler:	Lecturer, Yorke Peninsula College of Technical and Further Education
Trevor Urlwin:	Principal, Murraylands Community College (TAFE)
Peter Mosel:	Lecturer, Murra lands Community College (TAFE)

Students from the following courses were contacted during a telephone survey in November and December 1981.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NAME AND LOCATION OF COURSE
8	Retail Sales (Pt. Adelaide)
7	Retail Sales (Gawler)
6	Retail Sales (Murray Bridge)
5	Small Business Practice (Eyre Peninsula)
6	Fashion Industry (Gilles Plains)
9	Dental Studies (Gilles Plains)
9	Health Auxiliaries (Pt. Adelaide)
9	Horticulture (Kensington Park, Yarrabee Annexe)
7	Food and Bar Service (Gawler)
4	Food and Bar Service (Riverland)
5	Food and Bar Service (South East Community College)
7	Varied Trades (Eyre Peninsula)
11	Varied Trades (Murray Bridge)
7	Customer Contact (Croydon Park)
9	Customer Contact (Croydon Park)
7	Customer Contact (Adelaide)
4	Basic Farm Skills (Naracoorte)

B

DEPARTMENT OF FURTHER EDUCATION

TRANSITION EDUCATION EVALUATION

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1981

The purpose of this questionnaire is to learn from students in the Transition Education Programme about their school, home and employment background and their reasons for choosing this course.

NOBODY except the researchers will see your own answers.
All answers are confidential.

It is important to answer all questions carefully and honestly. Enter the appropriate number in the boxes provided. If you do not know the answer, or the question does not apply to you, please leave blank.

Form . . . | Q | 1 |

College ..... Code . . . | | |

Course ..... Code . . . | | | | | | |

Commencement Date .....

DAY		MTH		YR	

1. What is your sex?

Male	1	☐
Female	2	

2. Your age in years. ☐☐ Years

3. In which country were you born?

Australia	1	☐
Other	2	

If other, please specify.

_____

4. In which country was your Father born?

Australia	1	☐
Other	2	

If other, please specify.

_____

5. In which country was your Mother born?

Australia	1	☐
Other	2	

If other, please specify.

_____

6. How many years have you lived in Australia?

_____ Years ☐☐ Years

7. Do you live at home with your parents?

Yes	1	☐
No	2	

8. What is the principle language used in your parents home?

English	1	☐
Other	2	

If other, please specify.

_____

9. How many people in your family?
(e.g. Father, Mother, Sisters, Brothers and yourself). ☐☐

10. Single or two parents living at home?

Single	1
Two	2

☐

In the following questions, please list the jobs of the people indicated. Please be as precise and detailed as possible (e.g.: machine operator in a butter factory, senior clerk in a state government department, self-employed accountant).

Office Use Only

11. Your Father's (or male guardian's) occupation at present. (Specify whether full-time or part-time).

_____ ☐☐ ☐

12. Your Mother's (or female guardian's) occupation at present. (Specify whether full-time or part-time).

_____ ☐☐ ☐

13. The occupation that you would like to have in 10 years time.

_____ ☐☐ ☐

14. The occupation that you really expect to have in 10 years time.

_____ ☐☐ ☐

15. What was the level of your Father's education?

Primary only	1
Some Secondary	2
Matriculation	3
Technical or Trade College	4
Tertiary (e.g. University).	5

☐

If other, please specify.

_____

16. What was the level of your Mother's education?

Primary only.....	1
Some Secondary	2
Matriculation	3
Technical or Trade College.....	4
Tertiary (e.g. University)	5

If other, please specify.

_____

17. When did you leave secondary school?
Month and year: e.g if you left in June (6th Month) of 1978, the answer would be:

0	6	1	9	7	8
MTH		YEAR			

		1	9		
MTH		YEAR			

18. In what year or form did you leave secondary school?

Before finishing		Year 9... 1
"	"	Year 10.. 2
"	"	Year 11.. 3
"	"	Year 12.. 4

19. What type of secondary school was it?

Government.....	1
Independent-Catholic ...	2
Independent-Non-Catholic	3

20. When you left secondary school, did you plan to attend a technical or trade College?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, what type of course were you interested in? (e.g. Building, Food & Catering).

_____

_____

_____

Office Use Only

...../4

21. Since leaving secondary school, have you attended any courses besides this one?

Yes	1
No	2

Did you complete the course?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes,

(a) Type of qualification _____

(b) Institution _____

(c) Year qualification was obtained: 19 _____

If you started a course but haven't finished it, please give the following details:

(a) Type of qualification _____

(b) Institution _____

Office Use Only

22. When you left secondary school, did you have a specific job or career in mind?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, please give details.

_____

_____

Office Use Only

23. How many jobs have you had since leaving school?

none ...	0
one ...	1
two ...	2
three ..	3
more than three ..	4

.../5

24. Please provide details of your job experience since leaving school in the table below:

Description of Job	Name or Type of Employer	How long Employed	Full time	Part time
Eg: Shop Ass'stant	Newsagency	4 months		✓

25. How many months overall have you been unemployed since leaving school?

less than one month	0
1-3 months	1
4-6 months	2
7-9 months	3
10-12 months	4
13-18 months	5
19-24 months	6
25-36 months	7

☐

26. How long is it since you were last employed?

less than one month	0
1-3 months	1
4-6 months	2
7-9 months	3
10-12 months	4
13-18 months	5
19-24 months	6
25-36 months	7

☐

Office Use Only

	JOB	EMP	TIME	F/P.T
J1				
J2				
J3				
J4				
J5				
J6				

.../6

27. How important are the following reasons for starting this course?

Enter one of the following numbers 1-5 in each box to indicate the degree of importance for each reason.

e.g.

very important	1
fairly important	2
of some importance	3
of little importance	4
of no importance	5

1. To get training for a job .....
2. To get a basic general education.....
3. To please parents .....
4. To fill in time until I decide what to do .....
5. To study in a field that really interests me...
6. Because a job wasn't available .....
7. Other preferred courses were full.....
8. To be with friends doing the course .....
9. Because an apprenticeship wasn't available ....
10. As a preliminary to entering another course....
11. To help determine what career to follow.....
12. To qualify for extra social service allowance ..

If there are any other reasons, please explain them.

_____

_____

_____

If there is a reason that is particularly important to you please underline it.

Office Use Only

27. What sort of things do you expect to learn in the course you are doing? (Think of as many things as possible).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

28. Do you anticipate any problems because of doing this course?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Finally, we would like to see what people thought of the course after they have finished it. It would be helpful to us if you could write your name and address on the form. If you agree to do this, we guarantee that the information will not be seen by anyone other than the researchers.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

THANK YOU

OFFICE USE ONLY

Survey Form Number .... ☐☐☐☐

DEPARTMENT OF FURTHER EDUCATION

TRANSITION EDUCATION UNIT

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1981

FORM: | Q | 2 |

COLLEGE: ..... CODE: | | | 0 | 0 |

COURSE: ..... CODE: | | | | | |

COMMENCEMENT DATE: .....

Day		Month		Year	

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the value of the course that you have been participating in.

All answers are confidential and there is no need to put your name on the questionnaire.

It is important to answer all questions accurately. Enter the appropriate number in the boxes provided. If you cannot answer any question, leave the boxes blank.

1. Did you complete the whole Course?

Yes	1	☐
No	2	

2. If NO, why are you leaving?

To begin employment....	1	☐
To enter other Course..	2	
Unable to attend.....	3	
Do not wish to continue	4	

3. If you are prevented from attending the Course, indicate a reason:

No suitable transport.....	1	☐
Course times clash with other activities	2	
Parents require assistance at home.....	3	
Money problems.....	4	
Housing.....	5	
Other.....	6	

4. If you choose not to continue, indicate a reason:

Course not meeting my requirements	1	☐
Course too simple.....	2	
Course too difficult.....	3	
Don't like teachers.....	4	
Don't like fellow students.....	5	
Other.....	6	

5. How interesting did you find your Course?

Very boring.....	1	☐
Rather dull.....	2	
Fairly interesting...	3	
Very interesting.....	4	
Extremely interesting	5	

6. What is your overall assessment of the Course?

Very satisfied with Course...	1	☐
Satisfied with Course.....	2	
Uncertain.....	3	
Dissatisfied with Course.....	4	
Very dissatisfied with Course	5	

.../2

7. Do you think that the course was successful in developing the following?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't Know	3

(a) Sufficient working skills to enter a particular job. ☐

(b) Self awareness..... ☐

(c) Self confidence..... ☐

(d) Understanding of others..... ☐

(e) Positive attitude to undertake regular work..... ☐

(f) Recreation skills..... ☐

(g) Ability to analyse a particular job, i.e. its place in society, skill and qualification requirements.... ☐

(h) Your reading, writing and number skills..... ☐

8. How useful was your Course for the type of occupation that you expect to be employed in?

Very useful and relevant.....	1
Fairly useful.....	2
Not very useful.....	3
Of some slight relevance.....	4
Almost completely irrelevant and useless	5

☐

9. How do you think you compared with the other students in the Course?

Below average.....	1
Average.....	2
Above average.....	3
In top 20% of class	4
Near top of class..	5

☐

.../3

10. How much do you agree with the following comments about the Course?

Use the following guide to indicate how much you agree:

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Don't know	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5

(a) General work pressure was too great..... ☐

(b) There was not enough time to develop own study interests..... ☐

(c) There were too many hours in class..... ☐

(d) There was too much emphasis on job training..... ☐

(e) Course demanded too much mechanical learning and not much individual thinking..... ☐

(f) Too much like Secondary School..... ☐

11. How much do you agree with the following statements?

Using the same guide as before, enter a number 1 - 5 to indicate how you agree:

(a) Students were more interested in special job training than a general education..... ☐

(b) The atmosphere was practical and useful things emphasised..... ☐

(c) Too many subjects stressed theoretical ideas rather than real things..... ☐

(d) The Courses here included too many practical subjects ☐

(e) Most students were interested in their future jobs... ☐

(f) Many teachers stressed the practical uses of their subject so that a student may apply what he or she has learnt in a job..... ☐

(g) Learning to work with others is important..... ☐

.../4

12. Think of a typical teacher (lecturer) at your college who is neither best nor the worst in your experience, (or if only one, use that one). Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about him/her.

Use the same guide as for 8 and 9, enter a number 1 - 5 to indicate how you agree.

(a) Uses everyday practical examples of topics discussed ☐

(b) Provides some work for students which is similar to what they would do when they finish the course..... ☐

(c) Sets tasks which are useful and satisfying..... ☐

(d) Discusses the topics which relate to our society.... ☐

(e) Discusses the usefulness and benefit of each topic for later work..... ☐

(f) States clearly the purpose of each piece of work.... ☐

(g) Explains things clearly at the student's level..... ☐

(h) Enables you to work at your own pace..... ☐

(i) Gives enough time to complete a job..... ☐

(j) Sets deadlines for work to be completed..... ☐

(k) Actively involves students in lessons..... ☐

(l) Has motivated you to do your best work..... ☐

(m) Treats students as adults..... ☐

(n) Encourages students to take responsibility for their actions..... ☐

(o) States clearly the standards which are expected of students..... ☐

(p) Provides a lot of information about your progress... ☐

(q) Lets you select topics, problems and examples..... ☐

(r) Encourages students to co-operate with each other in jobs..... ☐

(s) Encourages students to think about their future..... ☐

(t) Requires correct spelling and expression in written work..... ☐

(u) Requires accurate calculation with numbers work..... ☐

13. Indicate whether you experienced any difficulties in the following areas of your Course.

Using this guide, enter the appropriate number in each box.

Generally Yes	1
Sometimes	2
Generally No	3
Not applicable	4

Mathematics..... ☐

Reading..... ☐

Writing..... ☐

Practical Skills..... ☐

Recreation Skills..... ☐

Communication..... ☐

Personal Relationships.... ☐

Projects..... ☐

Career Education..... ☐

Other..... ☐

If you answered *OTHER* please describe:-

.....

14. Did you get special assistance with any problem areas?

Enough	1
Some	2
None	3

☐

.../6

15. Describe how you feel about the components of the Course.

Using the following guide, enter the appropriate number in the boxes provided.

Most Difficult	1
Requires More Work	2
Easiest	3
Most Interesting	4
Least Interesting	5
Not applicable	6

Personal Development..... ☐

Communication Skills..... ☐

Community Studies..... ☐

Career Education..... ☐

Industrial Skills and Practice..... ☐

.../7

16. How important are each of the following in choosing a permanent occupation?

Using the following guide, enter the appropriate number in the boxes provided.

Very Important	1
Fairly Important	2
Slightly Important	3
Not Important	4

(a) There is good pay..... ☐

(b) The opportunity to work outdoors..... ☐

(c) It is interesting work..... ☐

(d) The occupation is useful to the community..... ☐

(e) Working with people..... ☐

(f) The occupation has high status in the community..... ☐

(g) There is good opportunity to travel..... ☐

(h) Helping other people..... ☐

(i) It is an occupation with security..... ☐

(j) The work is satisfying..... ☐

(k) Being my own boss..... ☐

(l) The occupation has good working conditions..... ☐

17. How definite are your plans for a job?

I have a job arranged..... 1
I know exactly the kind of job I want..... 2
I am trying to decide between two or three different kinds of jobs..... 3 ☐
I am considering more than three different kinds of jobs 4
I do not have any specific jobs in mind at this time.... 5

.../8

18. If you have a job arranged to which of the following categories does it belong?

Professional.....	1
Clerical.....	2
Armed Forces or Police	3
Trade.....	4
Factory Worker.....	5
Driver.....	6
Medical or Child Care.	7
Shop Assistant.....	8
Labourer.....	9
Other.....	10

19. How easy or difficult do you think it will be to get a job suitable to your training now that you have finished your Course?

Does not apply (I have a job arranged)	1
Very Easy.....	2
Fairly Easy.....	3
Difficult.....	4
Very Difficult.....	5

20. When was your choice of future job made?

No choice as yet.....	1
While in primary school....	2
While in secondary school..	3
At the time of completing secondary school.....	4
After being unable to get into field of first choice.	5
Some time after starting in the present Course.....	6

.../9

21. We would like you to think about some of the jobs you might do.

- List all the jobs or occupations you could do and would like, if you were able to undertake the necessary training, and if you could get that job when you finished your training.
- List as many jobs as you can, but don't feel you have to fill every space.

I could do and would like the following jobs:-

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

(e) _____

(f) _____

(g) _____

(h) _____

(i) _____

(j) _____

22. In which suburb did you study your Course?

Name: .....Post Code..... | | | | |

23. In which suburb would you have studied the Course if you had been given a choice?

Name: .....Post Code..... | | | | |

.../10

24. How did you find out that the Course was being offered?

Advertisement.....	1
CES.....	2
School Counsellor/Teacher.	3
Through Friends.....	4
Direct from College or DFE	5

☐

25. Did you receive counselling from a College staff member before you enrolled?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

26. How did you feel about the counselling?

Very Satisfied...	1
Satisfied.....	2
Uncertain.....	3
Dissatisfied.....	4
Very Dissatisfied	5

☐

27. Please write in the space provided any comments or suggestions that you have to help in the design of Future Transition Courses:-

D

APPENDIX D

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY GROUP ASSISTING THE PROJECT

B. Jackson:	Head, Transition Education Unit, Department of Technical and Further Education
D. Kuhl:	Principal Education Officer, Research Branch, Department of Technical and Further Education
J. Grosvenor:	Project Manager, Research Branch, Department of Technical and Further Education
J. Haigh:	Project Officer, Transition Education Unit, Department of TAFE
M. Bode:	Curriculum Branch, Department of TAFE
L. Gray:	Lecturer (until September 1981)
D. Hailstone:	Project Officer, Research Branch, Department of Technical and Further Education

E

APPENDIX E

'STRUCTURAL FIT' CATEGORIES

The following administrative categories shared the following characteristic: the curriculum (in terms of the occupational fields addressed in the course) matched the 'discipline' of one of the college's organisational sub-structures. The college therefore had 'in house' expertise in the field of occupational training relevant to the course. Moreover, it had an administrative system associated with that specialist field. The college therefore could be expected (a) to have consolidated relationships with local industries which would participate in the course and (b) to possess curricular and administrative experience upon which the course could be built. (see table 3, chapter 7).

CATEGORY A : THE COLLEGE TAKES UP A COURSE DEVELOPED IN A DIFFERENT COLLEGE

This category was defined as follows:

(i) Main teacher: lecturer from college's permanent staff.

(ii) Teacher's experience: (a) none with the specific course,
(b) familiar with college operations, local community and relevant industries.

(iii) College's experience: (a) some familiarity with the course,
(b) familiar with community and industry.

(iv) Curriculum status: curriculum established beforehand but in another college.

In this category the colleges staff staged a course established by another college. The administrative load devolved upon the college's permanent staff, as shown in table 3, chapter 7. Curriculum development was not a major task: the syllabus of the previous course could be adopted and if necessary adapted to meet the course's new context.

The category occurred in only one case and is likely to remain rare in the future. The reason lies in the seemingly paradoxical difference in the college's and main lecturer's experience with the course. In this case the lecturer, unlike another staff member, was unfamiliar with the course. This difference is explained by the transfer of an officer from a middle-management position in the college which previously staged the course to a similar position in the college under question. In both colleges the course was conducted within his school. Thus administrative experience relating to a specific course was carried from one college to another by

an officer other than the lecturer who would teach the course. In this category the administrative tasks therefore would not seem so formidable as those in colleges where no staff member, particularly at the middle-management level, was familiar with the course.

CATEGORY B : PART-TIME STAFF REPEAT THE COLLEGE'S COURSE

This category was characterised as follows:

(i) Main teacher(s): Part-time instructors (one or two) teaching much of the course.

(ii) Teachers' experience: familiar with the course, the industry, the local community and to some extent, college procedures.

(iii) College's experience: familiar with the course and relevant industry.

(iv) Curriculum status: curriculum established previously.

The allocation of duties is shown in table 3, chapter 7. General 'over-sighting' was performed by a permanent staff member at the middle-management level. However, the part-time instructors' previous experience with the course, taken with their major teaching role, placed them in a position where much of the administration rested with them. Furthermore, none of the fifteen tasks was without precedent in the college. The administrative impact of the course therefore was lower than in most other categories.

CATEGORY C : COLLEGE STAFF REPEAT A COURSE

This category is identified as follows:

(i) Main teacher: lecturer from the college's permanent staff.

(ii) Teacher's experience: familiar with course, industry, local community and college procedures.

(iii) College's experience: follows (ii) above.

(iv) Curriculum status: curriculum established previously and implemented by the college.

Of the various categories this one represents that most closely resembling a recurrent mainstream training course in a college. Administrative responsibility rested with permanent staff, especially the lecturer teaching the course. (see table 3, chapter 7). All of the tasks had precedent in the college. Since the major developmental work had been

completed, this category was the most 'routine' of any encountered in the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme.

However, the likelihood of its frequency increasing may be slight. Courses repeated in the same college may well saturate the immediate job-market and warrant replacement with a new type, more attuned to the changing labour market. This eventuality seems all the more significant because courses in this category address the same occupational fields as some courses in a college's mainstream programme. Expansion (or even continuation) of this category therefore might depend on the direction of course graduates to industries outside the vicinity of the college.

'Structural difference' models

In each of the following categories the fields of occupational training addressed by the course did not conform precisely to any of the 'disciplines' represented by a sub-structure of the college's organisation.

The college therefore was taking on an operation in a sphere where its training experience was relevant only in the most general sense.

CATEGORY D : PERMANENT STAFF PILOT A COURSE

This category was characterised as follows:

(i) Main teacher: permanent lecturer from the college's staff teaching some or much of the course.

(ii) Teacher's experience: (a) fully conversant with college procedures and local community,

(b) at least some familiarity with the industry,

(c) no previous experience with the course.

(iii) College's experience: as in (ii) (b) and (c)

(iv) Curriculum status: no curriculum established previously.

As shown in table 4, chapter 7, the administrative burden was borne entirely by the college's permanent staff. Much of the administration related to the development of a new curriculum and the organisation of activities (and considerable part-time instructor support) consistent with it. The expertise of instructors from local industry and the use of 'on-the-job training' compensated for the college staff's lack of experience in the course's occupational fields.

CATEGORY E : A VISITING LECTURER REPEATS A COURSE CONDUCTED PREVIOUSLY ELSEWHERE

This category was characterised as follows:

(i) Main Teacher: contract lecturer employed full-time at the college only for the one course.

(ii) Teacher's experience: (a) familiar with the course and the industry,
(b) not familiar with the local community,
(c) some familiarity with college procedures but not necessarily in that college.

(iii) College's experience: (a) some familiarity with the industry,
(b) familiar with community,
(c) familiar with the course.

(iv) Curriculum status: curriculum established previously (elsewhere).

This category relates to a type of course conducted in successive settings by the one contract lecturer. The lecturer was the 'expert' for the course's curriculum but was brought in 'cold' to the college and community. The task allocations as shown in table 4, chapter 7 are those which appeared most efficient. In some cases the contract lecturer was left with full responsibility for establishing the local industrial and community contacts. Arguably, in those cases greater contributions by the college's permanent staff would have been desirable: their established rapport with and understanding of their locality could have been drawn upon. The 'H.P.I. arrangements' tended not to constitute a major task because the bulk of tuition was provided directly by the full-time contract lecturer and was supplemented by 'on-the-job training' activities.

CATEGORY F : THE VISITING LECTURER PILOTS A NEW COURSE

This category was characterised as follows:

(i) Main teacher: contract lecturer employed full-time at the college only for the one course.

(ii) Teacher's experience: (a) familiar with the general industry and college procedures,
(b) not familiar with local community or with the course,

(iii) College's experience: (a) some familiarity with the industry,
(b) familiar with local community,
(c) no experience with the course.

(iv) Curriculum status: new curriculum.

The category presented the most telling administrative difficulties in the Vocational Preparation programme. In one case the visiting lecturer received (or assumed) responsibility for the bulk of the course's administrative tasks. This course was only marginally successful, partly because of problems stemming from administrative matters, and partly because of the course's novelty. A suggested allocation of duties for this category is included in table 4, chapter 7. It shifts responsibility from the visiting lecturer to the college for those tasks where the college's experience is more direct and relevant than that of the lecturer new to the college and its district.

CATEGORY G : PART-TIME LECTURERS REPEAT A COURSE CONDUCTED PREVIOUSLY

This category is characterised as follows:

(i) Main teacher: part-time instructor employed only for the course.

(ii) Teacher's experience: familiar with the course, the college's procedures, the industry and the community.

(iii) College's experience: follows (ii) above.

(iv) Curriculum status: curriculum established previously.

Much of the administrative responsibility rested with the temporary staff (see table 4). Their previous experience with the course, the college and the community lent the expertise enabling them to undertake some administrative duties which otherwise would have been directed to the permanent staff (see for example, Category B).

CATEGORY H : COLLEGE STAFF STAGE A COURSE DEVELOPED ELSEWHERE

This category is characterised as follows:

(i) Main teacher: lecturer from college's permanent staff.

(ii) Teacher's experience: (a) familiar with the college's procedures and the community,

(b) not familiar with the course or industry.

(iii) College's experience: follows (ii) above.

(iv) Curriculum status: curriculum established previously (in another college).

The allocation of duties in this category are also shown in table 4, chapter 7. The adaptation of the curriculum and negotiation of outside expertise and resources were major tasks. In this category, however, colleges drew indirectly on the experience of the college which first

staged the course.

CATEGORY I : PART-TIME LECTURER(S) TEACHES A COURSE DEVELOPED ELSEWHERE

This category is characterised as follows:

(i) Main teacher: part-time lecturer(s) employed only for the course.

(ii) Teacher's experience: (a) familiar with college procedures, community and industry,
(b) not familiar with the course.

(iii) College's experience: (a) familiar with community,
(b) not familiar with the course or industry.

(iv) Curriculum status: curriculum established previously (in another college).

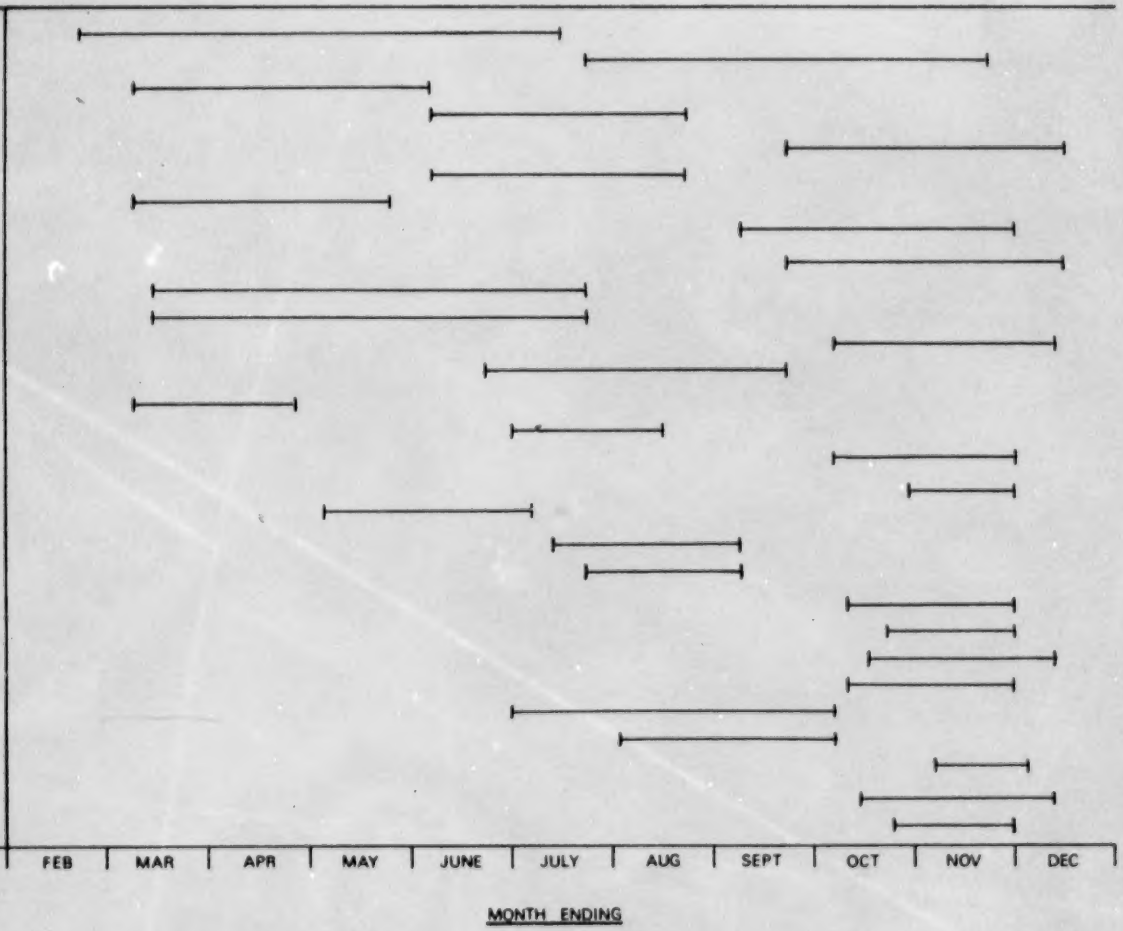
In an example of this category two part-time lecturers taught the bulk of the course. One was responsible for the 'personal development' and the general career education aspects of the curriculum, while the other was responsible for the occupational training. Their combined expertise and experience enabled them to undertake day to day administrative tasks and co-ordinate curricular activities in co-operation with the college's permanent staff member who tended to perform an oversighting role.

F

APPENDIX F

TABLE SHOWING TIME-SCALE OF VOCATIONAL PREPARATION COURSES 1981

Course	College
Varied Trades	Eyre Peninsula
Varied Trades	Murray Bridge
Customer Contact	Croydon
Customer Contact	Croydon
Customer Contact	Croydon
Customer Contact	Adelaide
Health Auxiliary	Pt. Adelaide
Health Auxiliary	Kadina
Health Auxiliary	Panorama
Fashion Industry	Gilles Plains
Dental Studies	Gilles Plains
Dental Studies	Gilles Plains
Horticulture	Yarrabee
Food and Bar Service	Gawler
Food and Bar Service	Riverland
Food and Bar Service	South East
Food and Bar Service	Port Pirie
Retail Sales	Pt. Adelaide
Retail Sales	Gawler
Retail Sales	Murray Bridge
Retail Sales	O'Halloran Hill
Retail Sales	Salisbury
Retail Sales	Kensington Park
Retail Sales	South East
Small Business Proc	Eyre Peninsula
Basic Farm Skills	Naracoorte
Basic Farm Skills	Kadina
Fibreglass Boat Blg	Pt. Adelaide
Fish Processing	Eyre Peninsula



APPENDIX G

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE 1981 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION EVALUATION PROJECT, INCLUDING RELEVANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE 1982 PROGRAMME

Area addressed	1981 Findings	1982 Developments
1. Role within the Transition Education Programme	The Vocational Preparation programme was successful in attaining the following objectives.	The 1982 programme maintains this broad intention.
1.1 Providing courses favourable to young unemployed females.	75% of students were young women. (10.3.1) 86% of all courses (29) led to employment prospects for females. (9.2.1)	maintained.
1.2 Providing courses for unemployed youth in rural areas.	14 of the 29 courses containing 46% of all students were provided in country settings. (10.3.2)	Priority to country colleges continues.
1.3 Providing training in 'semi-skilled' groups of occupations characterized by employment opportunities for youth.	Courses were funded on the basis of their relevance to industries a) not customarily provided by D.TAFE programme and b) requiring labour with skills approaching the 'semi-skilled' level.(Chapter 7)	Practice continuing in 1982.
	The feasibility of courses was established by means of informal investigation. (10.3.4)	Efforts to strengthen ties with industry have increased in 1982.
2. Administrative processes		
2.1 Broad finding.	The administrative pattern practised was considered adequate. Programme-level administration rested with Head Office (Transition Education Unit).	Continuing in 1982
2.2 College administrative input.	Curriculum design and implementation were college-level responsibilities. The administrative input by contract lecturers usually exceeded normal teaching duty. (7.4)	
	Pilot courses involved more administrative tasks than established courses. The need for additional resources was highlighted. (7.4.5)	Greater pre-course time given to lecturers piloting courses in 1982. Additional assistance also rendered by Curriculum Branch.
3. Student recruitment and selection		
3.1 Broad finding.	Students recruited in accordance with Commonwealth and Departmental policy. (Chapter 8) Recruitment practices were generally adequate. (8.3)	
3.2 Problems and concerns.	Problems emanated from differences between the selection criteria applied by colleges and the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). (8.5)	
3.3 Preference for widened student recruitment procedures.	A return to a joint CES referral and open-advertisement approach was generally advocated. (8.5.1)	Both CES referral and open-advertisement currently used.
3.4 Special problems of country colleges.	There is a need to draw students more widely and to take into account the relevant travel and accommodation costs involved. (8.7)	

Area addressed	1981 Findings	1982 Developments
4. Student characteristics		
4.1 Broad Finding.	The programme was successful in attracting the unemployed youth target group specified by Commonwealth authorities. (Chapter 9)	The same student target group serviced.
4.2 Summary of student characteristics.	Of the students surveyed: . 79% were aged between 17 and 19 years. . 60% had left school at least a year prior to attending the courses. . 75% had not been employed at least four months before starting the course. 25% had had no employment experience during the previous twelve months. . students generally had no more than average levels of education: over a half had not completed year 11 (9.2.1 - 7) . 93% of students enrolled 'to get training for a job'. . 80% were enrolled in an area 'that really interested them'. (9.3)	
4.3 Student personal problems.	A significant proportion of students had personal problems (social, financial and attitudinal), induced by long periods of unemployment, affecting their ability to cope with a full-time vocational course. Many lecturers performed a counselling role. (9.4)	
5. Student employment outcomes and other benefits.		
5.1 Broad Findings.	The programme was effective in providing vocational knowledge and experience. It also helped develop their confidence and self-esteem. (Chapter 10)	
5.2 Student employment outcomes.	Approximately 50% were employed within three months of completing courses. Industries employing students were mainly 'retail' and 'production process'. Employment rates of courses varied and was influenced by the nature of the student group and the characteristics of an industry or specific course location. (10.2)	Course types, geographical areas and specific industry groups considered unsuccessful in 1981 have been omitted or modified.
5.3 Development of students' vocational knowledge.	The majority of students consolidated their vocational preference as a result of attending courses. Some students felt that the courses could have been more practical. (10.2.4)	Course content remains a college responsibility in 1982. Colleges are informed by central administration of the need for courses involving skill learning and experiential learning.
5.4 Students' personal development.	A high proportion (80%) of students derived personal development benefits. These involved, . increased self-confidence and self-esteem, and . improved capacity, through greater self-direction, to seek employment. (10.5)	The need for students' personal development and general career education remains an important part of the curriculum.
5.5 Deterioration of student benefits in the longer term.	Some deterioration was observed in the longer term if not accompanied by at least partial employment success. This deterioration was lessened where continuing contact between students and the college existed. (10.7.5)	

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

(1) Ainley, J. and Fordham, A., Between School and Adult Life: An approach to the evaluation of pre-vocational education in TAFE, A.C.E.R., 1979.

CHAPTER TWO

(1) The project initial terms of reference were as follows:
"Pilot courses will be subject to ongoing (formative) and summative evaluation. The major issues investigated will be:

- Manpower training demand for particular occupation areas.
- Manpower training required outside of industry resources, in particular the vocational preparation needed.
- Selection of students.
- Education programme.
- Student assessment.
- Staff development.
- Value to employer of skills gained by course graduate."

In addition, it was recommended that the 'involvement of males and females will be monitored for most issues', 'ongoing evaluation will be used to promote immediate corrective action', and 'summative evaluation will have implications for delivery of future courses'.

(2) Stake, R. "The Countenance of Educational Evaluation" Teachers College Record, 68, 1967.

(3) op. cit. (Chapter one, note 1).

(4) Webb, F.J., Campbell, D.T., Schwartz, R.D., and Sechrest, L. (1966) Unobtrusive Measures.

CHAPTER FOUR

(1) This was also confirmed in discussions with the co-ordinator of the 1981 Vocational Preparation programme. Concern over inadequacies of students selected by the CES was also expressed by the Head of School of Para-Dental Studies, Gilles Plains Community College (TAFE).

(2) These discussions took the form of phone interviews and occurred in November 1981 at the same time as a student employment destinations survey was carried out.

CHAPTER FIVE

(1) A 'Retail Sales' course was also contemplated at this time, but insufficient student interest prevented it from proceeding.

(2) This prospect emerged in the co-ordinator's discussions with the local CES Manager.

(3) The apparently limited range of the industrial base in the Upper South East also militated against the funding of a 'Varied Trades' course, such as that funded at Murray Bridge and Port Lincoln.

(4) Naracoorte College of Further Education, 'Basic course for Farm and Station Hands', p.1 (May, 1981).

(5) Questionnaire data supports this view. Of the five students returning a questionnaire, two were fifteen years old, and three were aged nineteen years. Only one student had completed year 11 secondary education, three had completed year 10 and one left during year 9. All students had been unemployed at least ten months and three as long as thirty six months.

CHAPTER SIX

(1) Interviews conducted by telephone, November 1981, one week after the course was terminated. Two students from the course then employed with the firm were also interviewed.

(2) Nor were any Q1 or Q2 questionnaires completed by students and returned to the evaluation team. Hence it was not possible to determine

- the background characteristics of the students enrolled in the course, or
- their broad perceptions at the end of the course.

(3) For example, the Head of the Transition Education Unit was also concerned that the termination of the course might not have allowed students to experience some of the 'personal development' aspects of the course.

CHAPTER SEVEN

(1) For example, 'Food and Bar Service' courses were often 'based' at a location removed from the college.

(2) For example, the South East Community College (TAFE).

(3) See Basic Farm Skills course case-study, chapter five.

(4) See 'Dental Studies' case-study, chapter four. Other examples include: 'Varied Trades' (Eyre Peninsula Community College (TAFE)), and 'Small Business Procedures' (Eyre Peninsula Community College (TAFE)).

CHAPTER EIGHT

(1) See for example, chapter 5 'Basic Farm Skills' case-study. This 'topping-up' of a course occurred only in a small number of country locations (such as Naracoorte and Murray Bridge), and the local CES was usually consulted.

(2) This was confirmed during discussions with lecturers providing courses in the following country locations: Gawler, Riverland, Naracoorte, Eyre Peninsula.

(3) These were notably lecturers new to transition education and with prior experience in providing Vocational Preparation courses.

(4) This occurred at Naracoorte and Kadina ('Basic Farm Skills' courses).

(5) See chapter five, 5.6.1.

(6) See chapter four, 'Dental Studies' Case-study.

CHAPTER TEN

(1) This was contended by staff at Port Adelaide and Croydon Park Colleges of TAFE, and many staff in country colleges including the Gawler, Eyre Peninsula and South East Colleges of TAFE. A similar view was expressed by three full-time contract lecturers employed by Head Office to provide 'Retail Sales', 'Food and Bar Service' and 'Basic Farm Skills' courses.

(2) This was observed throughout the Vocational Preparation programme but was most noticeable in the 'Food and Bar Service' courses (Gawler and Riverland Colleges of TAFE), and the 'Dental Studies' courses (Gilles Plains Community College (TAFE)).

(3) One Head Office employed contract lecturer responsible for providing three courses in successive college locations commented:
"I always say to the students at the beginning of a course, 'right, we're going to give you some training to help you get a job, nothing is guaranteed and you'll have to look hard after you've finished the

course, but at least you'll have the course in your favour."

(4) This view was expressed by a representative from the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs at a Training and Development Branch meeting of transition education personnel on 3 May 1982.

(5) Harrison, D. Destinations of Technical and Further Education Students - 1980

Youth Bureau, Department of Industrial Affairs and Employment, South Australia, November 1981.

(6) These results were gained with the assistance of the course lecturers who maintained contact with the students several months after the courses finished. In the case of the Yorke Peninsula 'Health Auxiliaries' course, many of the students were employed by a local private nursing home.

(7) The lowest student employment rate was measured in the Basic Farm Skills course at Naracoorte College of TAFE. The specific circumstances influencing the outcomes of that course have been dealt with in chapter five.

(8) For example, staff at Croydon Park College of TAFE involved with the provision of the 'Customer Contact' course commented that they had increased the emphasis on student personal and attitudinal development in light of the characteristics of unemployed youth in the locality.

(9) One student, for example, from Health Auxiliaries course gained employment by writing to many nursing homes and informing them of her background, previous experience and involvement with the course.

(10) See chapter four, 'Dental Studies' case-study. Regular staff - student reunions were also arranged by lecturers involved with Croydon Park's 'Customer Contact' course.

(11) In particular the 'Basic Farm Skills' courses and 'Fashion Industry' (Gilles Plains Community College (TAFE)).